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COLLECTIONS

OF THE

NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FOR THE YEAR

1874.

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PUBLICATION FUND SERIES

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PRINTED FOR THE SOCIETY.

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## FINAL NOTE.

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*THIS* volume completes the present collection of *Lee Papers*. The delay in its publication has been due in part to engrossing occupations elsewhere of that member of the Committee who has furnished the manuscripts for the use of the Society; but mainly in the expectation or hope to make considerable additions from certain sources which it is needless to specify, as they have proved unproductive. There has been some intention, upon the failure of the additions just mentioned, to supplement the collection by materials derived from various other sources, in the form of an appendix of notes and illustrations; but that design has been abandoned as not altogether in harmony with the general plan of this series of publications. The latter part of the text of the present volume has therefore been devoted to the reproduction of the principal works relating to General Lee, including that of DR. GEORGE H. MOORE, the member of the Committee referred to above. It is unnecessary to repeat here the acknowledgments made in his preface (page 343 of this volume); and it only remains to make an addition to the record.

The basis of the whole collection has been the mass of original papers left by General Lee to WILLIAM GODDARD, and still preserved in his family. Through the kind offices of the HON. JOHN RUSSELL BARTLETT,

*and the liberal courtesy of SAMUEL G. GODDARD, son of the legatee, these valuable manuscripts were placed in the hands of DR. MOORE, soon after the issue of his work on "The Treason of Lee," with permission to use them for publication. To these gentlemen, therefore, the Society and the public are chiefly indebted for these important additions to the materials of American Revolutionary history.*

NEW YORK, January, 1875.

THE LEE PAPERS.

VOL. IV.

1782-1811.



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## THE LEE PAPERS.

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FROM MAJOR EVAN EDWARDS.

DR. GENERAL,

I am ever happy in embracing every opportunity of letting you hear from me however destitute I may be of having any thing to communicate. Every information respecting civil matters I am as ignorant of as I am of the immortality of the Soul. I know nothing of either, but by hear say.

We encounter every difficulty, endure every hardship, and submit ourselves to the all gracious will of our leaders, without pay or reward; except it is now and then the blessed thanks of Congress which we receive second or third handed.

General Green stands high in reputation. This State has presented him with a plantation, one hundred negroes in addition to the stock, all of which is valued at ten thousand guineas for his services in reclaiming it.

He enquired very affectionately after you, on my arrival here, and I do assure you he speaks of you in the highest terms of esteem.

Mr. Matthews is chosen Governor and Mr. Hudson Lieut.-Governor of South Carolina they have taken their seat with the Assembly at Jacksonburrow. Our Army in quality equal to any in the world, but in quantity very inferior to Genl. Leslie's have encamped several miles in their front. So great is the want of enterprize in the British and so shameful their inac-

tivity that they suffer the laws to be carried into execution to their very gates.

Dorchester, Stono, and Johns Island they evacuated on our approach since which both Armies have behav'd with all the passive complaisance of peace Makers.

I am very anxious to hear how you employ your time—have you visited the French Army? What do you think of the policy or wisdom of our rulers? their unaccountable conduct in not raising an Army when they have such a foreign force in the heart of their country? lead us not into temptation I hope may be the Common prayer of our allies—they must have lost their national policy, and be immaculate in Virtue, if they reap no advantage from our folly.

General Wayne commands in Georgia, he has with him White's Horse.

I have frequently seen Eustace since I have been here, but cannot inform you what he is doing. The Bearer of this is Colon<sup>l</sup> Williams, a young of this State attends him himself to school to Mr. Booth—pray where is Gener<sup>l</sup> Gates? do write me and inform me every thing respecting yourself, &c.

I am with unalterable friendship affectionately  
Yours,

E. EDWARDS.

8th Febr'y 1782, Camp Osburns  
Major Genl. Lee, Berkley County, Virginia.  
Col<sup>o</sup> Williams.

---

TO RICHARD HENRY LEE.

M<sup>r</sup> Thornton's April ye 12th [1782.]

MY DEAR FRIEND :

I have just received your letter by the boy, but must beg leave to differ from you in the main argument of it; for I confess that both as a Soldier and a Politician,



I think the only time for a redress of grievances is the time of war; and I believe that no instance can be produced from history of a people who have waited for the time of Peace, ever obtaining any redress at all.—*Rustici expectant dum defluat amnis.* Such, I am sure, was the persuasion of those glorious men who withstood the tyranny of Charles the 1st, and on this persuasion they regulated their conduct.

But I will venture to go farther, (you will perhaps think too far) I think, then, that America had better be conquered,—at least in that degree she can now only be conquered; that is, that she had better be reduced to the necessity of accepting the terms which it is said G. Britain means to propose, than to endure any longer such an odious tyranny as the capricious arbitrary government of an unlimited, uncontrollable Assembly. Besides, the War is now worn down to so diminished a size and quality, that no danger can possibly be incurred from insisting immediately on the remedy. Your favorite Junius says, after Locke, that there cannot be a more fatal doctrine to Liberty established than the omnipotence of Parliament. And this doctrine is certainly still less dangerous in G. Britain where the Parliament consists of three distinct branches, than in America where it consists of only one, for from the constitution of the Senate, (as it is ridiculously called,) they must be made up of the self-same clay. For God's sake, then, do not talk of Liberty until you have established the fundamental points, the limitation of the power of the Assembly and the full freedom of the Press. Unless these points are settled, every liberal understanding man will think the word Liberty (so sounded in our ears) a mere mockery, and will be very indifferent to the issue of the War.

You say there must be some abuses in all human systems of free Government, and you allow that ours abounds with 'em. But are not ours something more than abuses, and incompatible not only with free government, but any human society at all? Are they not

rather the most damned acts of atrocious tyranny, crying injustice, and felonious violence? For instance, the tender, the confiscation law which strips of their property (for no crime ever pretended,) indiscriminately Tories and Whigs, Friends and Foes, men, women and children; to this may be added the tearing from the clergy their freeholds, which was certainly as lawfully theirs as yours or mine. Such are the abuses which America's free system has already been ornamented with in so short a period as four years [of] self-government; abuses transcending all the enormities of all the worst Governments of Europe in four times that length of period. And I repeat, therefore, that no consideration on earth ought to deter us from putting some immediate restraint on the Powers of men who have been guilty of such accumulated villainy.

I have spoken freely to you, and I think I have as good a right to speak freely to America in the common cause of mankind, as I had to the British Ministry and Generals in the particular case of America. I have called it the common cause of mankind, because if ever really a free government should be established here, it might be the general Asylum.

My paper is now out, and it is very late, so Good night, and God bless you.

Yours,

C. LEE.

[From *The Independent Gazetteer; or the Chronicle of Freedom*. Saturday, June 15, 1782.]

TO COLONEL ELEAZER OSWALD.

Virginia, May 25, 1782.

MR. OSWALD,

From the title prefixed to your paper, it is to be hoped you will have no objection to admit into it, the enclosed extract of a letter from a gentleman in this

country, to a friend, a leading member of the House of Assembly. It was occasioned by the gentleman's writing to his friend, the necessity of immediately reforming certain abuses, but more particularly of setting some bounds to the uncontrolable powers assumed by the House of Assembly, which, if admitted, would establish tyranny in all its forms, and in the opinion of the best political writers, in the worst of all forms. The member agreed that the abuses ought to be corrected and the government ascertained, but that it was not a proper time to think of reform, whilst any kind of war subsisted on the continent;—the reply was as follows.

I have just received your letter, but must beg leave to disagree with you in the main argument of it. You ask me whether, as a politician, I think this a proper time for the redress of grievances whilst a war of some sort subsists on the Continent? My answer, as a politician, is, that I think the only time for the redress of grievances, is in the time of war; and, I believe, no instance can be produced, from history, of those who have been foolish enough to wait for the time of peace, ever obtaining any redress at all. *Rustici expectant dum defluat amnis.* (Clowns wait for the decrease of the river.) Such I am sure was the persuasion of those glorious men who withstood the tyranny of Charles the First, and in this persuasion they regulated their conduct.

But, I will go a little farther, perhaps you will think too far. I assert that America had almost better be conquered than endure any longer such an odious tyranny as the capricious, arbitrary government of an unlimited, uncontrolable Assembly; \* besides, the war is now reduced to such a size and quality, that no possible danger can arise from the people's immediately insisting on the remedy. Mr. Lock advances, and your favorite Junius enforces the maxim, that there cannot

\* It must be observed, that Virginia is particularly alluded to, the author being unacquainted with the other states.

be established so fatal a doctrine to Liberty as the omnipotence of parliament; and this doctrine is certainly less dangerous in Great Britain, where the parliament consists of three branches, than with us, where it consists only of one; for the Senate, as it is ridiculously called, from its constitution, must be made up of the self same clay as the Assembly. For God's sake then do not talk of liberty until you have carried the two fundamental points; I mean the limitation of the Power of the Assembly, and the protection of the full Freedom of the Press, which has, in this country, no more existence than it has in Rome, or at Constantinople. Unless these points are gained, every liberal, understanding man will think the word liberty (so eternally sounded in his ear) a mere mockery and insult to common sense; and, in despair, will be totally indifferent to the issue of the war.

You say that there must be abuses in all free systems of government, and you allow that ours abound with them: But are not ours something more than abuses? Are they not rather the most atrocious acts of tyranny, of crying injustice, felonious violence, and shocking cruelty? For instance, the Tender Law, inverting the eternal rules of justice, corrupting the morals of the people, inciting and securing every kind of breach of faith and villainy, and ruining the honest, the benevolent, and the generous. Secondly, The Confiscation Law, which strips indiscriminately of their property, Whigs and Tories, Friends and Foes, Women and Orphans, for no crime, or even the colour of any crime; unless eventual, unavoidable absence, from the necessity of their affairs, can be constituted a crime. The iniquity of this measure is so abominably gross, that by all accounts, it has made a very ugly impression, with respect to the American national character, on the minds of all the nations of Europe, and particularly of her Allies. To these abominations, I think may be added, the disseisen of the Clergy and of their freeholds, which were as uncontrovertibly their legal

property, and held by as sacred and indefesible a tenure as is the patrimony of the most ancient families in Virginia, descended to them by the longest race of ancestors. Such are the abuses with which our free system has abounded in so short a period as four years. Abuses not to be paralleled by all the enormities of the worst governments in Europe, in a period of twenty times that length; and I repeat therefore, that no consideration on earth should deter us a single moment from putting some restraints on the power of a body of men, who stand convicted of such complicated folly and wickedness: This is speaking, you will think very freely, but surely we have as good a right to speak freely to all America, or to the government of any of her distinct states, in support of the general rights of mankind, as we had to speak freely to the British King, the British parliament, and the British Ministry, in support of the particular rights of America. I have said the general rights of mankind, because if a free government should ever be established in this country, it may be a general asylum to the oppressed from every quarter of the globe.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

From Oswalds *Independent Gazetteer*, June 29, 1782.

Berkley County Virginia May 30, 1782.

A little before General Lee had the misfortune to be taken Prisoner in the year 1776, he left several Trunks, Boxes and Portmanteaux, none of which to his Knowledge fell into the Hands of the British Army, of course they must be in some American Hands; the Articles which he particularly recollects they contained, were as follows: One new Polish Uniform, white faced with blue, one new Uniform of the third

Battalion of Phila. Associators, brown faced with white, and Silver Epaulets, five Waistcoats of fine Cloth, a complete Hussars dress of Black Cloth garnished with Fox Skin, several Pair of Silk Stockings, a Spy Glass, but above all, a remarkable Pair of PISTOLS mounted with Steel and inlaid with Gold, with the name KOSKI, ingraved on the Locks. Whoever is in possession of any of the said Articles, it is to be hoped will deliver them into the hands of Mr. Oswald, Printer at Philadelphia, who will amply reward them; the PISTOLS are of a more Particular Value than any of the other articles, and whoever delivers them as above directed, shall receive Two GUINEAS Reward.

CHARLES LEE.

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FROM MAJOR GENERAL LINCOLN.

War Office, June 8, 1782.

I have been honored, my dear Sir, with your letter of the 10th ultimo. It affords me real pleasure to find that I am considered by the Citizens of Winchester as General Lee's friend—do me the justice to believe that this opinion is perfectly corroborated by sentiments of esteem and affection, which, I hope, will always retain me such.

The Commissary of prisoners is instructed to continue the Prisoners of War at Winchester for the present.

What change future arrangements may induce I cannot foretell. I trust they will enable me at all times to gratify the wish of friendship in complying with your request.

I have the honor to be, with real esteem and affection,

Your obedient Servant

B: LINCOLN.

## TO MISS SIDNEY LEE.

MY DEAR SISTER,

The other day by a kind act of Providence, a letter of yours fell into my hands, of so late a date as the 20th of March, and what is more, it had the appearance of never having been opened : the pleasure it gave me you will better conceive than I can express. For at present my American enthusiasm is so far worn off, that the greatest satisfaction I can receive is to be informed of the health and welfare of my English Friends, who with all their political Sins, Corruptions, & follies, are still possess'd of more virtues (at least as Individuals) than all the nations of the Earth put together ; as to these people, (who I once to my cost thought quite otherwise) now their characters are developed, They manifestly are not only destitute of the personal good qualities and virtues of their English ancestors, such as truth, honesty, sincerity, frankness and steadiness in friendship ; but I can assure you, that the great Publick qualities, which you at a distance suppose them to be endowed with, will not stand a scrutiny ; but a scrutiny of this kind in a letter is not possible—All I shall say is, that (the New England men excepted) the Americans (tho' they fancy & sometimes call themselves Romans) have not a single Republican qualification or Idea. They have always a God of the day, whose infallibility is not to be disputed ; to him every man must bow down on pain of political damnation. Washington has long been in this state of divinity—but I think, of late the legality of his apotheosis begins to be called in question. You will naturally be curious to be acquainted with a character that has made so much noise ; Shakspeare has drawn it in some measure in his Merchant of Venice, but it wants finishing. There are a sort of men, whose visages do cream & mantle like a standing pool ; and do a wishful stilness entertain, with purpose to be dress'd in an



opinion of wisdom, gravity & profound conceit &c &c—in fact the bearing of a mysterious carriage of the body, to hide the defects of the mind, is his great talent & his only talent. For tho' he is not without understanding, his understanding is of so slow a sort, as not to be of any use (at least) in that situation to which the infatuation of the people has rais'd him; but en revanche, as the French say, he has an ample share of cunning, which enables him, by direct or indirect means (but the latter is his favorite mode) to work the ruin of every Man who has excited his jealousy or offended his pride, and whoever sins in either of these two points has no chance of being forgiven by the most essential services. I do not wonder (such is the weakness of the multitude) that a man who has not really great parts or sterling Virtues, but who has something specious and shining about him, or that a General who is not really a great soldier, but who has blundered himself into success at different times, should impose for a while; but how a man without fashion, air, manners, or Language enough to relieve a Corporals Guard, and who has blundered himself into innumerable defeats & disgraces, and only stumbled (and that notoriously not his own measure) into one successful surprise of a drunken Hessian, should ever become the object of popular adoration, I confess astonishes me. Indeed it is so astonishing, that if this letter was publish'd, I have no doubt, it would be considered as the mere effusion of personal pique and resentment; let them think so if they please; but should the Avenues of truth be once open'd, the World will be asham'd of the gross delusion they have been so long kept in, with respect to this puffed up Charlatan. I shall mention two others of his amiable qualities, and then have done with him, he is extremely prodigal of other men's blood and a great œconomist of his own. You are curious my Dr Sister, on the subject of my finances, and to know whether these people to whom I have sacrificed everything, have shewn the same ingratitude with respect to



my circumstances as they have in other matters: I can assure you that their actions are all of a piece; and if it had not been for the friendship of a Mr. Morris and a fortunate purchase that I made (more by luck than cunning) I might have been begging in the Streets without much chance of relief, not but, that to do justice, there are many exceptions from the General American Character, both in and out of the Army; but I think the greater number are of the latter class; men of some honour, and who, I believe have acted on principle from the beginning; and all these I may without vanity say, have been my friends and Advocates; it would be tedious & impertinent to mention their names to any body but you; but as you interest yourself in the minutest circumstance that really concerns me, I will venture to give you their names—of those who are not in the Army (but the leading men in the Civil line) are Richard Henry Lee of Virginia; Morris of Philadelphia, Morris and Schuyler of N. York, Adams, Lovel, and Whipple of N. England, Smith of Virginia, Clark of the Jerseys, and I may add the whole State of N. Carolina. As to the Army, they are innumerable of every line & rank, indeed I might assert every Man (the perjurd pack'd Majority of scoundrels by whom I was tried, and the sycophants of Head Quarters excepted) But I have been particularly fortunate in my Aid-de-Camps; all young Gentlemen of the best fortunes, families, and education of this Continent. They have adher'd to me with admirable zeal and affection, undergone no small persecution since the trial, and withstood many tampering artifices before the trial for I assure that some of these virtuous Republicans have as happy a disposition for tampering as any Princes or Ministers in Europe, & I must do the justice to his Excellency General Washington to acknowledge that he is a master in this noble science, but the subject tires me as I dare say it has you a long time ago. I am extreamly rejoic'd at my friend Burgoyne's restoration to employment; for I really love

the Man ; He has a thousand good qualities, and (notwithstanding his miscarriage in this country) he was certainly an excellent soldier, there cannot be a stronger instance of the power and whimsicalness of Fortune in War, than that such a Man as Burgoyne should be baffled defeated and taken by such a man as Gates. I fancy he has often lamented that he did not pay some attention to my Counsels: he wou'd have sav'd himself much trouble and disgrace, and perhaps the British Empire from the calamitous situation to which she is now reduc'd. Great God, what have the Kings American Governors and the American Tories to answer for: I mean the really and truly tories (for on this Continent the denominations of Whig & Tory have for some time past exchang'd their significations) a man who holds and acts on the genuine Whig principles is now a Tory, and a man who acts according to the rankest Tory maxims is now only esteem'd to be a Whig ; but I speak of the real Tories—These men, with Hutchinson (and I am sorry to say it) our quondam friend Gage at their head, seemed dreadfully apprehensive lest his Majesty should lose so glorious an opportunity of throwing down the whole fabrick of the British Empire ; for execrable as is the opinion I have of Germaine, North, Sandwich, and the whole pandemonium of the late Ministry I cannot believe they wou'd have push'd their madness and folly to such ruinous extremes, had they not been encouraged, or rather incited by the misrepresentation & forgeries of these Men—You have now an able and virtuous Administration ; Heaven send that they may devise some means of saving the wrecks of the Empire ; and at the same time of serving the true interests of this people ; ungrateful & worthless as I have found them ; for tho' the bulk who are horribly silly, imagine themselves in a prosperous and glorious situation ; those amongst them who have understanding & honesty enough to confess their sentiments allow that their prospect is a hideous one ; the seeds of civil war and of Anarchy are already

scattered; and if prevented, the preventive must be almost worse than the disease, it must be by almost a total dependance on France. It is extremely unfortunate that the Ministry had not the Wisdom to acknowledge the Independence of America, before some powerful Demagogues (who now in all appearance are pensioners of France) had time to seduce the people into a forgetfulness of the Principles on which they set out; and as in this Country there has been no more freedom of the Press than there is at Rome or Constantinople, and as the people, (from living abstractedly) are naturally very credulous, the grossest impostures are swallowed down. These worthies or pensioners have not only seduc'd the people from the original principles of the War, but from common sense, and all regard for the welfare of themselves and their posterity. Their cry is now (in diametrical opposition to the most explicit terms of the plainest Treaty that ever was penn'd) that they are not to make any peace (even the most salutary and glorious) until their great Allies are satisfied; which construed into plain English is this, that they are not to make any peace until France has stripped Great Britain of all she possesses in the East & West Indies, in short until France has establish'd herself in the full Empire of the Seas; which added to her immense national resources, will enable her to give law to all the World, and amongst the rest, to scourge the Americans themselves, whenever they grow naughty or refractory, and it must be confess'd they will richly deserve it for their egregious folly. It is notorious (I hope you will excuse my pedantry) that the Basilicon Aureum Gallicum, or the French Golden Specifick, has had a wonderful operation on public bodies of men on several parts of Europe at different times, and there is the greater reason to believe that it has been applied with not less success on public bodies on this side the Atlantic, for it is impossible to account by any other means for so gross an inversion of so plain a Treaty as was that betwixt Congress and

France, which a Child of Six years old, (if he had learn'd to read) may understand as well as the ablest Casuist of Europe. The words of the Treaty were these (at least of the only Treaty presented to the eyes of the people) that America was at liberty to make peace whenever she thought fit, on condition only that the Independence of the thirteen United States was obtained: And if Congress have by tortured instructions or by any subsequent Treaty, kept a Secret from the people, engaged themselves further they have certainly exceeded their power to a treasonable length. But I am wandering in a Labyrinth of Politics. Let me return to my own affairs. M<sup>r</sup> Mure has used me most cruelly, I may say villanously, for notwithstanding the vast sums he is indebted to me, he has protested a Bill of three hundred pounds which has thrown me into unspeakable distress; he affects, it seems such delicacy in his loyalty as not to honor the Bills of a Rebel. I really believe his countrymen think they have an exclusive patent for rebellion; but if he will consult the proclamation of Sir Henry Clinton issued in the year 78, or if he will consult Sir Henry himself he will find that I, who never have acted in any civil or military capacity since the date of that proclamation, am exempted from all apprehension of confiscation; but from the character of the man there is another consideration which probably will have more weight with him, which is that if by the fortune of war (which I leave him to guess at, and which I assure you I do not hope) a certain event should take place, I shall have it in my power to retaliate on him two fold for his iniquity—I wish this hint cou'd be artfully convey'd to him, which I think can be done through the channel of Sir Charles Bunbury or Sir Charles Davers, whom I entreat you will urge to endeavor to influence this man, at least to furnish M<sup>r</sup> Garton, with six or five hundred pounds for my use until the contest is over, and the Law according to the terms of peace tells us what is to be done. But at any rate, He, M<sup>r</sup> Mure, as an individual, can have

no claim to any part of my fortune. He must account for it either to me or to the public; of course he only ruins his character as a gentleman, and a Moral man, without reaping any advantages. I would willingly write to Sir C. B. and Sir C. D. but consider the more letters I write, the greater chance there is of some being opened and read, tho' in fact I do not care if this was published at Charing Cross, and in the Market Street of Philadelphia, as it contains nothing which a good Englishman, and a true friend of America may not avow. You are therefore welcome, (and indeed I rather wish you would) to send the heads or if you please the whole of this letter to the aforesaid Knights, to whom I beg you will give the strongest assurances of my love and affection; and if you have an opportunity I entreat you will in the strongest terms assure my Lord Thanet, that absence, persecution, and distress can never diminish the true love and veneration I have ever had for him from our first acquaintance; I am extremely concerned that our Cousin S should embarrass you about your legacy; but these are strange times, the Moon comes nearer the Earth than she was won't to do, and unhinges all understandings. Is my Noble worthy friend Butler alive and amongst you? if he is, a thousand blessings on his head in my name, and at least five hundred on his Cousin Capt<sup>n</sup> Totty, who I assure you is a most worthy character—in short to the whole tribe at Gwynigog: My love to the Townshends, Hunts, Hinckes's, Barrots, and that God Almighty my dearest of Friends & Sister, may give you long life comfort and serene spirits is devoutly the wish of your most affectionate Brother

C. L.

P. S. The reason of this letter being written not in my own hand I will explain hereafter.

## DRAFT OF THE FOREGOING LETTER.

Virginia June ye 22 4th 1782

MY DR. SISTER,

The other day by a kind act of Providence, a letter of yours fell, into my hands, of so late a date as the 20th of March, and what is more, it had the appearance of never having been opened : you will better conceive than I can express the pleasure I received from it. For my American Enthusiasm is I assure you at present so far worn off, that the greatest satisfaction I can receive is to be informed of the health and welfare of my English Friends, who with all their political faults and stupidity, possess still more virtues (at least of the individual kind) than all the nations of the Earth—as to these People, tho I once thought the reverse before they had developed. When their characters are impartially and minutely discussed I am sure they will appear not only destitute of the personal virtues and good qualities which render those they are descended from so estimable in the eyes of other nations—such as truth, honesty, sincerity and good understanding—but I am much mistaken which you at a distance suppose 'em to be endow'd with will stand a scrutiny, but a discussion of this kind in a letter is not possible—All I shall say is, that (the New England men excepted) the rest of the Americans (tho' they fancy & sometimes call themselves Republicans) have not a single republican qualification or idea—They have always a God of the day, whose infallibility is not to be disputed; to him all the People must bow down and sing Hosannas. Washington has long been in this state of divinity—but I think, of late the legality of his apotheosis seems to be disputed. If you are desirous to have the portrait of the man, Shakspear has already drawn it to the life in his Merch't of Venice—There are a sort of men, whose visages do cream & mantle like a standing pool; and

do a wilful stillness entertain, with purpose to be dress'd in the opinion &c &c This I assure you is literally his Portrait, if not something underdone—I do not wonder (from the weakness of the multitude) that a man without sterling parts or essential virtues, but who has fortunately some specious qualities about him or is a General without the least talents but who has blundered into success should impose for a time but how a man without fashion, air, manners, or Language enough to call for a bowl of punch in a public house and only blundered himself into one successful surprise of a drunken Hessian, should ever become the object of popular adoration, I confess astonishes me—I have no doubt but that if you should read this letter to some People They will consider it as the mere effects of pique and resentment; let 'em think so if they please; but I can assure 'em that should once the Avenues of truth be open'd, the World will be astonished and asham'd of the gross delusion they have been so long kept in. You are curious my Dr Sister, on the subject of my finances, and to know whether these People to whom I have sacrificed everything, have shown the same black ingratitude with respect to my circumstances as they have in other matters: I can assure you then that their actions are all of a piece; was it not for the friendship of a Mr Morris and a fortunate purchase that I made (more by luck than cunning) I might be begging in the Streets without much chance of being relieved, not but, to be just, there are many exceptions to the general character of the Americans, both in and out of the Army; but I think the greater number are of the latter class; men of some honour, and who, I believe have from the beginning acted on principle; and all these I may without vanity say, have been my friends and Advocates. Those who are not in the Army, if not too tedious, I will mention are Richard Henry Lee of Virginia; Morris of Philadelphia, the Morris's of New York, Adams, Lovel, and some others of N.



England. Of the Army, of every line they are innumerable. General Schuyler, Mifflin, Sullivan, Mulenberg, Wayne, Weedon, Green, Knox, in short all that have distinguished themselves so far that you must have probably heard their names, and the younger part to a man—But I have been particularly fortunate in my Aid-de-Camps; all young Gentlemen of the best families, fortunes, and education of this Continent, but above all I should mention young Colonel Harry Lee who has signalized himself extremely in this accursed contest the ruinous consequences of which to the whole Empire I predicted to Lord Percy and to my friend General Burgoyne to the American. They certainly were not the aggressors—but retrospection is now of no use—the question is at present what is to be done to save the wrecks of the Empire and at the same time to serve even these ungrateful and worthless People [*end of first sheet of draft in Lee's handwriting*]. the People in general in all civil contests have not been the aggressors—They only wish to defend not to encroach—The Monarchs or Magna[tes] generally commence by their oppressions—witness the disputes betwixt the Patricians and Commons of Rome, and our wars in the time of Charles the First—but the People in the [end] forgot the principles on which they set out which ultimately brings destruction on both parties and this I extremely apprehend will be the case at present—for I much doubt if there are not now many on this side the water who fancy or have made it their interest to throw impediments in the way of any accommoda[tion] even the most salutary and glorious—the House of Bourbon alone can reap any advantages from the continuance of the contest—but I am running too far into the labyrinth of politicks I shall return therefore to the subject of my own finances—Mr. Mure has used me most cruelly and villainously—notwithstanding the vast sums He owes me, He has protested a bill of three hundred pounds which has thrown me into unspeakable distress—He has affected



a delicacy in honouring the Bills of a Rebel—but if He will consult the proclamation of Sr Henry Clinton in year seventy eight He will find that I am exempted from any apprehension of confiscation by the terms of this Proclamation—which declares that no man from the date thereof who does not positively act in a civil or military capacity is subject to the confiscation of his property—but as I have reason to think that the man will avail himself of every chicane when money is in the case—I must intreat that you will urge Sir Charles Bunbury and Davers—to endeavor to influence him at least to furnish Mr. Garton for my use, with five, four or at least three hundred pounds until the contest is over and the law according to the terms of peace tells us what is to be done—but at any rate, He, Mr. Mure, can have no claim to my fortune—He of course only hurts his character as a Gentleman and a moral man, without reaping any advantage—He must account for it to somebody—I have thoughts of writing to Sr Charles Bunbury and Davers—but do not chuse that what I have to say to 'em shou'd be subject to inspection on either side—in the mean time my love to 'em, and if you have an opportunity to Lord Thanet—I am extremely concerned at the Embarras our Cousin S— gives you with regard to the legacy but it is the very error of the moon—She comes more near the earth than she was wont to do—and makes Men mad—is my Dearest worthiest Friend Butler alive and amongst you? if He is a thousand blessings in my name on his head—My love to Mrs. Hinks the Townshens Barrets and that God Almighty, My Dr Sister, may give you long life ease and spirits is devoutly the wish of your most affectionate

Brother—C LEE

[A small blank space follows at the bottom of this page and on the next, i.e., the fourth page of the sheet, is the following]

but I am involving myself in a labyrinth of politicks I shall now finish with a repetition of what I have formerly declared in some of my publications that I am an enthusiastick friend to the rights and liberties of mankind in general—that I love my own Country almost to adoration—and that all my actions (whatever may be thought) are to be reconciled to this principle I profess—I have long foreseen that the determined corrupt system of the Court (unless vigorously opposed in some part of the Empire or other) would destroy in the end the whole I considered the Empire of Great Britain as a great aggregate of freemen—with more or less ostensible privileges but I saw and ev'ry man must have seen who has eyes to see that those parts that had the least ostensible privileges, were more advantageously circumstanced than the presiding People—this was certainly the case both of the Americans and the Irish as long as they were only taxed by them [*the fourth page ends here, but the sentence is continued on the fourth page of another sheet, as follows*] themselves notwithstanding some impolitick and ridiculous restrictions on their commerce—but these restrictions, were of so little a grievous nature, considering their advantages in other points, as cou'd not possibly have destroyed the Peace of the Empire—the first sensible Minister wou'd have remov'd them—

[*The remainder of the fourth page is blank—but pages one, two, and three contain the following:*]

Great God what have the Governors Refugees and Tories to answer for—I mean the really and truly Tories (for on this Continent these epithets have of late changed their signification—The Whigs are Tories and the Tories Whigs) but these men with Hutchinson and Gage our quondam friend at their head seem'd dreadfully apprehensive lest His Majesty shou'd lose so glorious an opportunity of throwing down the whole Fabrick of the Empire—for bad as is the opinion

I have of North Germain Sandwich and the whole Pandemonium of 'em—I cannot believe that they wou'd have pushed their madness and folly to such ruinous extremes, had they not been encouraged or rather incited by the misrepresentations and forgeries of these men You have now certainly an able and virtuous administration—I wish to God they may devise some means of preserving the wrecks of the Empire—and at the same time serving the interests of these People worthless and ungrateful as They are—for tho' the bulk of 'em who are dreadfully silly imagine themselves in a happy and glorious situation Those of understanding and who have honesty to confess their sentiments allow that Their Prospect is a hideous one—the seeds of anarchy and civil war are already plentifully sow'd amongst 'em—or if it is prevented, the preventive must be almost worse than the disease it must be by almost a total dependence on France I wish this unfortunate Ministry had been wise enough to have acknowledged the Independence of America—before some villains had dared to lead the People into a forgetfulness and desertion not only of the Principles they set out on—but of common sense and all consideration of their own safety and the welfare of their posterity. The cry of these men I allude to is now this contrary to the plain terms of a plain treaty, that they are not to accept of any peace even the most glorious and salutary untill their good Allies are satisfied, that is construed into English until the French have stripped Great Britain of all their possessions in the East and W. Indies in fact has . . . She has obtained the full dominion of the Seas which added to her immense natular [sic] resources will enable her to give law to the whole world, and amongst the rest to scourge the Americans themselves when ever They grow naughty or refractory—and they certainly will deserve it most heartily for their egregious folly.

It is notorious that the famous pedantick Gallicum aureum basilicon or the French golden specifick has had

a powerful operation on publick bodies of men in all parts of Europe at different times—and there is great reason to believe it has been applied with not less success on publick bodies of men in this country, for it is impossible to account by any other means gross and tortured misconstruction of so plain a treaty as was that with France, which a Child of six years can understand as well as the ablest Casuist of the world—The words of the treaty are these (at least of the only treaty presented to the eyes of the People) that America may make peace whenever she pleases, on condition only that the Independence of the thirteen united States is obtained—and if Congress have by tortured construction or by any subsequent treaty which They have not imparted to the People engaged themselves farther, They have certainly exceeded their power to a treasonable length.

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TO ROBERT MORRIS.

Virginia, July 20, 1782.

MY DR. SIR,

The not hearing from you has given me very great uneasiness but I can excuse your silence as from all I can conceive you must not only have business enough for one able man but for half a dozen at least but however if you can steal time sufficient to confer on me three or four lines you will take me out of a very disagreeable state of suspense. I need not repeat the particulars of the favour I asked at your hands but I want much to know whether you had it in your power (for I never doubted of your inclination) to comply—but my debt to M<sup>r</sup> Byrd gives me the most particular uneasiness I wanted to know likewise whether you employed any body to look out for a purchaser of my estate and with what success for it is impossible for me to hold out another year in my present situation for as

the taxes encrease and the means of selling any produce at a tolerable price every day diminishes my debts must every day encrease in double proportion for interest as well as principal must be paid. my present tax in hard money I can hardly pay a guinea of and consequently must submit to be distressed. Now I talk of taxes I will venture to assert that Virginia cannot pay the fortieth part of the taxes resolved on—indeed it is plain that she never did pay (when they were lighter) the fourth part enacted it has been proved that the small part which was collected both hard money and produces were never applied to the maintenance of the Army, or to any legitimate purposes but have somehow or other been lost on the Road. I confess I am not politician enough to comprehend what Congress mean in declaring they will have no peaces, however salutary, until their good allies assent which construed into plain English is that they will have no peace until France has stripp'd G. Britain of all her possessions in the East and West Indies in short not until France has secured the Empire of the Sea which added to her immense national resources will enable her to give law to the whole world, and amongst the rest to scourge the Americans themselves whenever they grow naughty or refractory—if Congress have bound themselves to this by Treaty it may without rashness be pronounced they have acted insanely perniciously and indeed exceeded their powers to a treasonable length, but at least if they chuse to fight the Battles of France to their own future ruin they ought to insist that the party which alone is to be the gainer should pay the expenses wholly—for a man must be drunk or a lunatic who can suppose that this Country (If all the States I mean are in the circumstances of this) can subsist cloath and pay even the Skeleton of an Army—but I am running into a labyrinth of Politicks I shall therefore only once more repeat my request I mentioned. I likewise must intreat that you will make some inquiries about the money and interest due to me in S. Carolina for Mr. Rutledge

flattered me that they were certainly able and willing to pay the interest at least which at present would make me easy and comfortable. I hope Mrs Morris and your children are all in perfect health. I hear you have sent or are going to send your two eldest sons to Geneva. They have certainly good masters but when I was there it was rather too expensive—Wherever they go I hope they will contribute to the honour and happiness of their Father and Mother, as I am most sincerely theirs

CHARLES LEE.

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TO GENERAL HORATIO GATES.

Philad<sup>a</sup>, July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1782.

DEAR SIR,

You will receive this from John Vaughan, Esq<sup>r</sup> a young Gentleman recommended to my attention by his Father Sam<sup>l</sup> Vaughan Esq<sup>r</sup> of London an old Friend & Correspondent before the Revolution & likely to become so again. M<sup>r</sup> Vaughan is commissioned by His Father to purchase Lands with my approbation. I have advised him to visit Gen<sup>l</sup> Lee's Estate, examine into its value, situation &c. and if he approves it is probable the purchase will be made, as I think Lee is disposed to sell reasonably.—

I remember you expressed a wish to sell your place, if so shew it to Mr Vaughan, let him see its good & bad properties, name a moderate price, & it may suit him to buy both. He is not yet ready to make payment but soon will be, & whatever engagements he makes with my approbation I will engage for. Assist him also in respect to Gen<sup>l</sup> Lees Estate or any other he may see or hear of.

Gen. Lincoln promised me that he would open a correspondence with you in order to extricate you from the disagreeable part of your situation as an officer. He is

a worthy man, and I depend on his promise My Com-  
plt<sup>s</sup> to Mrs Gates & believe me

D<sup>r</sup> sir, Your sincere Friend & obt ser<sup>t</sup>

ROB<sup>t</sup> MORRIS.

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TO ROBERT MORRIS.

August y<sup>e</sup> 15<sup>th</sup>, 1782.

MY DEAR SIR,

Your friend M<sup>r</sup> Vaughan has been with me: He seems a sensible and well bred young man, and upon my word (according to the vulgar saying) he seems to have all his eye teeth about him. You as our common friend enjoined me to be moderate in the price I should set on my estate. I really think I have been very moderate. When the bargain I had made with Dorsey was talk'd of in the Country all those who pretend to be connoisseurs said that I had given it away—and those I have reason to think my friends and who do not talk for talking sake and who are at the same time esteemed competent Judges of the value of Lands have seriously remonstrated with me for my folly. They all agree that taking all its circumstances together, its command of water, its excellence and abundance of pasture—in short if I may use the expression its manageability at a small expence as a grazing farm renders it preferable to almost any estate in Virginia at least of an equal extent. Some assert it is worth two half soes an acre, others more—perhaps these valuations are nett'd and extravagant. I myself think honestly they are, but as M<sup>r</sup> Goddard wrote me word that you yourself flattered me, that there was a probability of obtaining at least three guineas and a half an acre, I conclude you will not think I have transgressing the bounds of modesty in proposing to M<sup>r</sup> Vaughan two guineas and a half—M<sup>r</sup> Vaughan argues very ingeniously and arithmetically on the value of money on these times, that he knows means of laying out money to greater advantage



than the purchase of lands—All this may be very true, but as I have not the secret and the generality of land holders are no wiser than myself he will find it difficult (if he is seriously determined to buy land) to make so advantageous and easy a purchase as I have offer'd but however my dr friend such is my uneasiness at my present debts, that if you think I ought in duty to myself to make any farther abatement I am ready to do it —As to the means mode and time of payment I rely entirely on you, but it is necessary that I should be furnished with a certain sum immediately for the payment of my debts and less than eight hundred pounds sterling will not suffice—I know not what is the cause my dear friend, but of late I find myself much affected in my health—perhaps it is my state of rustication, perhaps the embarrassment of my private affairs, and perhaps in great measure the disagreeable aspect of public affairs, for with submission the prospect is not only disagreeable but hideous, at least to a man of my feelings and sanguine expectation. I have ever from the first time I read Plutarch been an Enthusiastick for liberty and (to my cost I now find) for liberty in a republican garb—indeed it is natural to a young person whose chief companions are the Greek and Roman Historians and Orators to be dazzled with the splendid picture—but alas I now find this perfect kind of liberty could be only supported by qualities, not possess'd by the individuals of the modern world—a public and patriotick spirit reigning in the breast of every individual superceding all private considerations—it was this spirit alone that carried several of the Grecian states and the Roman Republick triumphantly through so many ages—for as to the formal literal construction of their Governments, They were defective to absurdity—it was virtue that supported them—All writers agree that virtue must be the basis of republics and most of all Federal Republics—have the Americans this necessary virtue? On the contrary are they not on these setting out more corrupted than the oldest people in Europe—



And it is no wonder—They are corrupted by the laws themselves, which Mr Montesquieu says is a corruption incurable because the evil is in the remedy itself—but to shorten my sermon, the Empire of Britain is overturned and the situation of America neither promises happiness security nor glory—the House of Bourbon alone can cry out le triumphe—this you will say I ought to have seen before—I confess it and the sense of my want of foresight perhaps concurs strongly to the uneasy situation of my mind and of course so sensibly affects my health and spirits. I should make you a thousand apologies for having so improperly drawn upon you but it was entirely owing to my not reading with sufficient attention one of Goddard's letters which if I had done I should have submitted to every distress rather have so imposed myself on your friendship—but as it is done I can only in the style of a naughty boy cry out pray Dr Sir forgive me this time, and I will never do so no more—I wish you and your family more sincerely health prosperity and spirits and intreat you to continue your friendship for

Yours

C. LEE.

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TO ROBERT MORRIS.

August y<sup>e</sup> 19<sup>th</sup>, 1782.

MY DR SIR,

Since I clos'd my long letter (which I wish you may have patience to read) in order to be secure against any suspicion of being thought unreasonable in the price in I have put on my lands I have consulted every gentleman I have met with respect to its real value—it is true I have only met with two, Dr. Bull and Mr. Cook Nourse's Son in law—the former is of opinion I ought by no means to part with it for less than two guineas and a half p'r acre—the latter thinks that three Pounds Virginia Currency that is two pounds eight shillings sterling would be sufficient—in short I have not heard

of a single man (Messrs. Nourse and old Wormley excepted) who have thought of a lower valuation—the first is proverbial for making bad bargains for he some time ago sold the best part of his estate for about the fourth part of its value—and when he has said that such a thing is only worth so much it is highest Treason to his infallibility to differ—no Welshman mounted on a mule is half so obstinate—the second\* Mr. Wormley (tho' a very honest man) is as remarkable for stamping a very high value on what belongs to himself and depreciating what belongs to other People All his own Geese are Swans all his pewter silver and all his dray-horses are mountain Arabs. He himself lately sold a tract of land which is certainly not worth the third part of mine for five thousand pounds sterling—but in short the lowest valuation put on mine by fair Judges (that of M<sup>r</sup> Cook) is two pounds eight shillings sterling per acre, but upon my honour (from all I can learn) your friend M<sup>r</sup> Vaughan will have a very good purchase if you decide (for I leave the difference to you) that the sum should be fifty shillings—if the contract is assented to I suppose it will be necessary that I should go to Philadelphia and if this is necessary M<sup>r</sup> Vaughan or somebody must furnish me with a necessary sum for the journey—for I have not a farthing in the world.

Adieu God bless you My Dr sir

CHARLES LEE.

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FROM C. M. THURSTON.

DEAR GENERAL,

I have taken the liberty of inclosing your acco<sup>t</sup> of Mares to the horse black and all black of last Season, as I never was before in so great want of cash, and am obliged to pay high for his hire. I assure you the Money will be deemed a favour, and I shall acknowledge it: For where to apply for even so small a sum

but to yourself, with any prospect of success, I know not.

Your mare is so recovered, that she may be got home by a careful hand, and believe me when I tell you she has been taken greater notice of, than if the property had been my own.

I beg you to accept my congratulation on the sale of your land—disposed of, I presume on such terms as you wished; altho' at the same time I must aver as the strictest truth that the consequence, which I suppose will be your leaving us, fills me with a great deal of concern.

And what think you of the news in circulation? do you not look forward to a peace at a very short day? My opinion is, Britain is now in earnest; every beat of her pulse, and every symptom of her political disorder shews it to be drawing to a crisis. But *your opinion* on the subject I shall place the greatest confidence in.

If I'm wrong pray set me right.

I am to entreat you dear General to believe that on many accounts, and with the highest respect, I am affectionately Your most ob<sup>t</sup> Serv<sup>t</sup>,

[C. M. THURSTON.]

30. Aug<sup>t</sup> 1782.

Dr 3 Mares 1781 to horse @ 25%                      £3 : 15 :

General Lee,  
Berkeley.

N. B. I have now a bed in every room in our little house—where you can be comfortable here, we shall be proud of your company

C. M. T.

#### COPY OF GENERAL LEE'S WILL.

I MAJOR GENERAL CHARLES LEE of the county of Berkeley, in the Commonwealth of Virginia, being in perfect health, and of a sound mind, considering

the certainty of death, and the uncertainty of the time it may happen, have determined to make this my last will and testament, in manner following: that is to say, I give and bequeath to ALEXANDER WHITE, Esq. one hundred guineas, in consideration of the zeal and integrity he has displayed in the administration of my affairs, also the choice of any two of my colts or fillies under four years of age.

*Item*, I give and bequeath to CHARLES MINN THURSTON, Esq. fifty guineas, in consideration of his good qualities and the friendship he has manifested for me; and to BUCKNER THURSTON, his son, I leave all my books, as I know he will make a good use of them.

To my good friend JOHN MERCER, Esq. of Marlborough in Virginia, I give and bequeath the choice of two brood mares, of all my swords and pistols, and ten guineas to buy a ring: I would give him more, but as he has a good estate and a better genius, he has sufficient, if he knows how to make a good use of them.

I give and bequeath to my former aid de Camp, OTWAY BYRD, Esq. the choice of another brood mare, and ten guineas for the same purpose of a remembrancer.

I give and bequeath to my worthy friend Colonel WILLIAM GRAYSON, of Dumfries, the second choice of two colts: and to my excellent friend WILLIAM STEPTOE, of Virginia, I would leave a great deal, but as he is now so rich, it would be no less than robbing my other friends who are poor. I therefore entreat, he will only accept of five guineas, which I bequeath to him to purchase a ring of affection.

I bequeath to my old and faithful servant, or rather humble friend, GISIPPI MINGHINI, three hundred guineas, with all my horses, mares, and colts of every kind, those above mentioned excepted; likewise all my wearing apparel and plate, my waggons and tools of agriculture, and his choice of four milch cows.

I bequeath to ELIZABETH DUNN, my housekeeper, one hundred guineas and my whole stock of cattle, the four milch cows above mentioned only excepted.

I had almost forgot my dear friends, (and I ought to be ashamed of it,) Mrs. SHIPPEN, her son THOMAS SHIPPEN, and THOMAS LEE, esq. of Belle-View. I beg they will accept ten guineas each, to buy rings of affection.

My landed estate in Berkeley, I desire may be divided into three equal parts, according to quality and quantity; one-third part I devise to my dear friend JACOB MORRIS, of Philadelphia; one other third part to EVAN EDWARDS, both my former aid de camps, and to their heirs and assigns; the other third part I devise to ELEAZER OSWALD, at present of Philadelphia, and WILLIAM GODDARD, of Baltimore, to whom I am under obligations, and to their heirs and assigns, to be equally divided between them; but these devisees are not to enter until they have paid off the several legacies above mentioned, with interest from the time of my death, and all taxes which may be due on my estate. In case I should sell my said landed estate I bequeath the price thereof, after paying the aforesaid legacies, to the said JACOB MORRIS, EVAN EDWARDS, ELEAZER OSWALD, and WILLIAM GODDARD, in the proportions above mentioned.

All my slaves, which I may be possessed of at the time of my decease, I bequeath to GUISSIPPI MINGHINI and ELIZABETH DUNN, to be equally divided between them.

All my other property of every kind, and in every part of the world, after my decease, funeral charges, and necessary expenses of administration are paid, I give, devise, and bequeath to my sister SIDNEY LEE, her heirs and assigns for ever.

I desire most earnestly, that I may not be buried in any church, or church-yard, or within a mile of any Presbyterian or Anabaptist meeting-house; for since I have resided in this country, I have kept so much bad company when living, that I do not chuse to continue it when dead.

I recommend my soul to the Creator of all worlds

and of all creatures; who must, from his visible attributes, be indifferent to their modes of worship or creeds, whether Christians, Mahometans, or Jews; whether instilled by education, or taken up by reflection; whether more or less absurd; as a weak mortal can no more be answerable for his persuasions, notions, or even scepticism in religion, than for the colour of his skin.

And I do appoint the above-named ALEXANDER WHITE and CHARLES MINN THURSTON, executors of this my last will and testament, and do revoke all other wills by me heretofore made. In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal this  
day of \_\_\_\_\_ in the year of our Lord, one  
thousand seven hundred and eighty-two.

CHARLES LEE.

\*  
\*       \*  
\* SEAL. \*  
\*       \*  
\*       \*

Signed, sealed, published,  
and declared by the said Ma-  
jor General CHARLES LEE, as,  
and for, his last will and tes-  
tament. In presence of

JAMES SMITH,  
SAMUEL SWEARINGEN,  
WILLIAM GARRARD.

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At a court held for Berkeley county the 15th day of April, 1783, this last will and testament of CHARLES LEE, deceased, was presented in court by ALEXANDER WHITE, one of the executors therein named, who made oath thereto according to law, and the same being proved to be executed on the 10th day of September, 1782, by the oaths of JAMES SMITH and SAMUEL SWEARINGEN, two of the witnesses thereto, and ordered to be recorded; and on the motion of the said executor who entered into bond with ADAM STEPHEN, esq. his secu-

rity, in the penalty of twenty thousand pounds, conditioned for his true and faithful administration of the said estate. Certificate is granted him for obtaining a probate thereof in due form of law.

A COPY.

WILLIAM DREW.

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FROM THE PENNSYLVANIA INDEPENDENT GAZETTEER,  
OF JANUARY 31. 1784.

MESSRS. PRINTERS,

There are few men, of any character, whose actions in life, in some respect, do not challenge and receive the public attention. Such is the lot of humanity! In vain have most men been the objects of calumny and detraction, or flattery and adulation. Small indeed is the number whose memory is at all recollected and preserved; and it would be still more inconsiderable, if the good and virtuous part of mankind were only remembered.

Beyond doubt those persons have the first right to the public ear, whose services have benefitted their fellow men, who have promoted the arts and sciences, refined and fostered manners, and dignified their country. These characters like some elegant picture, drawn by a masterly hand, strike us with superior lustre; and their praises and excellencies are always sweet in the mouths of good and grateful men.

Yet such is our miserable weakness, that we cannot help enquiring after others who have once made a figure in the sphere of things, although they were only remarkable, perhaps, for great vices and singularities. We are very eager to know every trifling occurrence which concerns them; and this is sometimes useful, and affords matter for imitation or instruction.

No sooner are such characters deceased and gone, than the world is filled with memoirs and stories respecting their life and conversation—And even their last Wills and testaments, composed in the cool mo-

ments of mature reflection, have been published to the world.

There is in fact, something in the last wills of men of genius and abilities, which generally attract the public eye.—Hence it is that their wills have been communicated, without hesitation, to the public.—It was on this principle the wills of Pope, Swift, Chesterfield, and others, were printed: And on the same ground I now send you for publication, a copy of the will of the late General Lee, respecting whose character I shall add nothing. Let Fame do her own as to his merits, and unprejudiced posterity will, no doubt, be grateful.

As my sole view in introducing this Will to the public, is merely to amuse them and please the curious—As I have no desire to cast the most distant obloquy on the religious denominations of which he speaks, I must flatter myself that the printing the following Will, more especially as it has been much talked of and falsely represented, cannot give any kind of anxiety or umbrage.

It may, however, check the passions of malignity to observe, that the writer of this Will is now in his grave, counted with the silent dead, and is gone to that distant world, to which we are daily advancing; from whose confines no weary traveller with tidings, hath yet returned; and to which heavenly place nothing is a better recommendation than the generous exercise of Charity and Benevolence, the fountains of every moral excellence.

A SPECTATOR.

[*N. Y. Packet*, Feb. 9. 1784.]

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TO MAJOR GENERAL NATH. GREENE.

Baltimore, Sept<sup>r</sup> y<sup>e</sup> 12<sup>th</sup> 1782.

MY DR GENERAL,

As I am now in a place from whence a letter can be convey'd with safety—I take the opportunity of congratu-



lating you on the honour you have so justly acquir'd—You have acquir'd it not by the infatuation of the People or by the little arts of employing puffers in the public papers, or by detaching missionaries into different parts to scoop out the brains of the People and then fill their skulls with mundungus—in short the glory you have obtain'd is of a more solid nature, and I sincerely wish you may live long to enjoy it for tho I know that it is written that if our merits are really great, We enjoy a greater share of fame after death. I cannot help thinking that it is pleasant to taste of it, en passant whilst we are alive—I have long wish'd to thank you my Dr Sir, likewise for the handsome and generous part you have acted by me. My friends Edwards and Harry Lee have frequently inform'd me, of the generous indignation you have express'd at the unworthy and scoundrel treatment I have receiv'd—I thank you therefor most cordially and devoutly—I have now to beg a favour at your hands, or rather I may say indeed an act of justice—it is this, there is in one of your Regiments of Cavalry, one Albin Throgmorton who with two or three others robb'd me of four horses—for they had not a shadow of Authority for taking 'em—three of 'em I am told, for they killed the fourth are now in your Army—two of 'em Edwards is well acquainted with—these I must intreat you will empower him to seize as my property and to injoin him to convey 'em to me by the first safe opportunity, for I have not a single Horse for my own use—this act of justice I flatter myself you will with pleasure do—and I shall consider it as some addition to the obligations I consider myself as under to you—Adieu, My Dr General, may you live long and happy

CHARLES LEE.

General Green

[*Endorsed by Gen. Greene*]

General Lee Sept 12th, 1782

WILLIAM GODDARD TO JOHN VAUGHAN.

Balt. 29. Nov<sup>r</sup> 1782.

SIR,

Common Fame only hath announced to me that I am included amongst the Number of General Lee's Legatees, having had no advice on the subject either from his Executors (tho' I have rec<sup>d</sup> a Letter from one of them relative to his affairs) or from the Gentlemen who have assured you of their Readiness to confirm the Bargain you mention to have made with the General; besides, as I have good reason to believe that the General's will is not yet proved, I do not think it becomes me to interfere in his Concerns in the present State of them—I cannot, therefore give you so speedy and explicit an Answer as you desire, which, from a Disposition to oblige, I would most cheerfully do, were it in my Power; but thus much I can confidently declare that I am heartily disposed to comply with any requisition that can with propriety be made to me; and that if it shall hereafter appear that I am really one of the General's Legatees, you may rely that I shall only claim what on a proper Investigation, I have a just Right to hold by the Tenor of his Will, the only Title I can have to any Thing that was his property.

I am not sufficiently skilled in the Science of Law to determine as to the validity of your Transactions with the General relative to his Berkly Estate—but this I know that the General's principal inducement to sell that Interest was to obtain a sum for the immediate Payment of his Debts (in which Business he had engaged my assistance) but as he did not receive the expected or any Consideration, he obtained no Benefit, and you sustained no Injury—The General may have injudiciously signed a Paper (as he had heretofore done) from that same kind of Ignorance of Business that he discovered to you with Respect to the Exchange

of which I am persuaded, you would by no means wish to take an advantage, especially as you are indifferent respecting the Event.

I am, respectfully, Sir,  
Your most obed<sup>t</sup> Serv<sup>t</sup>

W. G.

M<sup>r</sup> Jno. Vaughan.

P. S. Under the Idea that I am of the General's Legatees, several advantageous offers have been made to purchase my supposed Right to a 6<sup>th</sup> of the Berkely Estate; but I could give no conclusive answer for reasons similar.

GENERAL WASHINGTON TO MISS SIDNEY LEE.

Head Quarters in the State of N. York,  
April 20<sup>th</sup> 1783.

MADAM,

Not till yesterday was I honoured with your favor of the 14<sup>th</sup> of January.

I delay not a moment to assure you, that with great pleasure I undertake to procure for you an authentic copy of General Lee's Will in which from report, you have a considerable interest.

If upon receipt of it, it shall appear that any opinion of mine can be of service to you, I will submit it to your consideration with great chearfulness. In the meanwhile permit me to offer you compliments of condolence on the loss of so near a relation who possess'd many great qualities; and to assure you of the respect and consideration with which I have the honor to be, Madam,

Yr. most obed<sup>t</sup> & Most H<sup>ble</sup> Serv<sup>t</sup>

G. WASHINGTON.

Miss Lee.

## ADVERTISEMENT.

[From Loudon's *New York Packet*, January 1, 1784.]

## TO BE SOLD

THAT *noted* PLANTATION, late the property of Major General CHARLES LEE, deceased, in Berkeley county, Virginia 25 miles from the warm springs, and near the river Patowmack; containing at 2800 acres of remarkable valuable land, exceeding well watered and in good fence, 800 of which are cleared, with a large proportion of meadow, and a great number of fine springs of water on almost every part of it. There are on it a small dwelling House, and a number of good out houses, a Distillery that works six stills—a very large Barn—fine stone Stables—a large house built also of stone—a Maltstery. &c &c.

It has a very fine mill site, and a saw mill a little out of repair.

This plantation is situated in a very agreeable neighborhood, not far from the place of future permanent residence of Congress, and adjoining lands belonging to His Excellency Gen. Washington Col Washington, Col Stephens, Mr Brian Breen, and near the residence of the Hon. Gen. Gates.

In short the advantages and fertility of this estate are so universally known and admired as to render any further recommendation, or a more particular description unnecessary.

For particulars enquire of Mr Jacob Morris, merchant, New York—Mr William Goddard, printer, in Baltimore—Dr Edwards, near Philadelphia—or Col. Eleazer Oswald, at the Coffee house, Philadelphia.

N. B. A part of the above plantation is divided into a number of small farms, with improvements, which rent for tobacco, wheat, corn, hemp, &c.

MAJ. GEN. HORATIO GATES TO WILLIAM GODDARD.

Travellers Rest

14<sup>th</sup> April, 1785.

DEAR SIR,

Your letter of the 8<sup>th</sup> of March after laying a considerable Time in a Tavern at Frederick Town, opened and read by all who had curiosity so to do, was on Monday brought to me by M<sup>r</sup> James Wormley, whose brother John, picked it up at Morris's Ordinary, and gave it to him to deliver—Upon my arrival here on the 26<sup>th</sup> of February, I sent your Letter to Colonel Thurston, he lives Thirty Miles from hence, and but for the bad weather, and roads next to Impassible, I had seen him before now; next week I think to have that pleasure—Jocepi Manghini has been with me we are laying our Heads together to fulfill your request, but must have time to do it. I think to be at the Powtomac meeting in George Town, the 17<sup>th</sup> of May, & will take Baltimore in my Route, when you may Expect to get everything I can procure you upon the Subject, you are so solicitous to have investigated; and which, I assure you, I am equally earnest with yourself, to Supply you with every means in my power to obtain the End proposed—let me know by the Return of the Bearer, the latest day that you are to remain in Baltimore, and rest Satisfied, after that, upon my best endeavours to furnish you with all the Materials that can be procured you By your affectionate Humble Servant,

HORATIO GATES.

WILLIAM GODDARD TO MAJ. GENERAL GATES.

Johnston (County of Providence)

Augt. 17th. 1793.

DEAR SIR,

Our mutual worthy Friend M<sup>r</sup> Lorman in his Tour thro' the Northern States, having favour'd me with a

visit, and mentioned his Intention of paying you his Respects on his Return to Baltimore, a grateful Recollection of the reiterated acts of Kindness and Hospitality with which I have been honoured by you and your invaluable Lady, impels me to embrace so favourable a medium of Conveyance to announce to you my Removal from the busy scene in which I have with various success been occupied for upwards of 20 years at Baltimore, to enjoy the happiness of more tranquil scenes amongst the affectionate Friends & Companions of my youth in this quarter—to offer you and Mr<sup>s</sup> Gates the tender Regards of myself and beloved Partner and to assure you that it would greatly enhance the Felicity of our present rural life to have the opportunity of receiving you both under our humble roof—such a *Contrast* to the Palace of your Residence might serve to heighten your enjoyment on your Return, if you should thus distinguish us, especially when you reflected on the happiness you had diffus'd amongst your numerous Friends in this part of an Empire you have contributed to raise & render free and happy—who entertain a just sense of your important military achievements, and who hold you in grateful remembrance as a Friend a Patriot, & a Soldier—I had the pleasure a few days since of drinking your good Health among a number of your good Friends at Governor Bowen's, all whom united with me in wishing you would, accompanied by your Lady, honour us with your Company—an Honour we do not despair of, since our Packets furnish such convenient & delightful Means of passing from New York to Providence.

I shall leave it to Mr Lorman (if of sufficient consequence) to describe to you and Lady the Place on which, after a variety of Fortune, I have sat down, and where (I hope in a Residence of some permanency) I expect to pass the remaining days that may be allotted me by Divine Goodness—It was the frequent observation of an old friend of mine that "*Mediocrity* was a Situation the most eligible in Life, and it was wisdom

to know when it was attained to"—whether my Situation is thus eligible I dare not venture to say—I must, however, strive to be contented with my Lot in Life, lest the Epitaph on the Valetudinarian should be applicable to me—"I was sick and was *well*, but would be *better*, took Physic and died."

Politics having taken such a wonderful Turn, and Events of such awful Magnitude and enormity having taken place since I had the pleasure of seeing you, that my mind is perplexed and depressed by the Consideration of them—I shall therefore wave the Discussion of Subjects that could only tend to awaken the painful Sensations that you must have felt on hearing of the many bloody unprofitable Tragedies in Europe and America; besides you are less secluded from the great World, have most ample information & means of forming your better Judgment of what hath past, and what may probably be expected to take place on the greatly agitated & distracted Theatres of Action, in both Worlds.

At present I have only Time to mention that it was the wish of myself & Partner to have been able to wait on you & yours on our way hither; but meeting with an immediate Passage we were induced to embrace it on account of our little Pilgrims who were, at that Time, indisposed unusually troublesome—and that I am, with every Sentiment of Respect, Esteem & Affection,  
Dr sir,

Your sincere Friend and most devoted humble servt  
WILLIAM GODDARD.

Honourable General Gates, at his seat near New York.

By the Favour of M<sup>r</sup> Lorman.

## PETITION.

*To the Honourable the Speaker and House of Delegates.*

We the Inhabitants of Berkley County beg leave to represent to your Honourable House some hardships which the Right Honourable Thomas Lord Fairfax appears to us to labour under with respect to his being liable to the Treble Tax so justly Imposed upon non Jurors, and as we apprehend his case is unexcepted in the United States, we his Neighbours think it our indispensable duty to bear Testimony of his uniform friendly conduct in the most publick manner toward the Liberty's & Friends of America from the commencement of this Anxious struggle.

We apprehend the Imposition of Treble Taxation to be the punishment of Citizens refusing his assistance for his attachment to his country from which assistance nothing but the most powerful reasons & Peculiar situation can Justify a refusal these we humbly conceive coecede in my Lord Fairfax's case. With as much trouth do we bear witness as with pleasure we have heard from the enacting of those Tyrannical Edicts which caused the present bloody and cruel War My Lord Fairfax Publicly Reprobating all these Measures & exciting the People to defend their inestimable Priviledges with Pleasure we have seen him rendering every service in his power to carry his resolutions into a happy execution such conduct never could proceed from an Enemy to the People of this Country and his known and long tried Candour and Honour Banishes the very suspicion of desembling. When our Currency was in the most uncertain Situation and when the sychophants of Britain were decrying it by every Infernal art he ordered his Collectors to receive the Paper Dollars at Six Shillings apiece before which Silver ones had at no time been received into his office for more than



five shillings and nine Pence after the Depreciation had rendered Gold and Silver so valuable that many Paper Dollars were given for the value of one in those metals he has obliged our unhappy Prisoners persons with whom he had not the least acquaintance at an equall exchange to no Law of the States has he been repugnant but with the utmost chearfulness has submitted to all at all times; active to furnish his Quota except in taking the oath of Fidelity, the reason for this non-submission we hope will appear as favorable to your Honorable House as they do to us and alleviat him from a Burthen which must otherwise end in his Inevitable Ruin.

Possessed with a Title and an Estate in the Country of our inveterate Enemy in either of which he is no longer concerned the one being already delivered to his Successor tho not legally conveyed and the other in the course of nature must soon descend the strict adherence to moral duties which have so eminently distinguished him thro a very long course of years he conceives forbids him to Injure that successor by doing that which would incur a forfeiture of that Title & Estate in a Country which succession is tied down to and obliged to live in conscious of the rectitude of his own intentions and the daily Evidences he gives of his attachment to the American Cause no Emoluments however large no Avoidance of hardships however severe can move a mind steady and determined as his is to [*blank in original*] of his birthright a Brother (whom he thinks the resolution has morality for its Basis) tho he owes his King no alegiance & would Sacrifice his life before he would profess him any, & has no connexion with the Country in which he resides.

We beg leave to represent to your Honourable House that the chief part of his Estate lying in Land most of which are rented out at low rents the Treble Tax will in a very short time must swallow up the whole as the six Shillings in the Pound has already done the Quit rents for the Two shillings which he has always given

to his Collectors added to the Eighteen Treeble of the Six leaves him not one farthing remaining provided all his Quit rents were collected which never was the Case.

These measures with innumerable beneficent actions with which we dare not take up more of your time deeply feeling for the impending Calamities of as true an American Citizen as any upon her Continent have induced the subscribers to Petition your Honorable House to take the peculiar situation of this unhappy Gentleman into your wise consideration, and do most humbly pray that from your wisdom and goodness some mode of his Release may be carried out had we a surmise that a wish against the Interest of America was lurking in his breast our Petition should be of a different Tenor, but from a long life spent in Honour being now largely upwards of Four score years of Age without a shadow of deceit we cannot be mistaken and must greatly greave if such a venerable Head must Bow down with Sorrow to the Grave.

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#### COPY OF A LETTER TO MAJOR HUNTER.

Your situation at present is perhaps more important than yourself conceiv'd when you were elected. Virginia is certainly one of the first, if not the first State on the Continent, much therefore depends on the wisdom of her Assembly, much is and ought to be expected from her, on you perhaps depend the future peace happiness and Liberty of the whole. But will you pardon me in saying that almost every act of the last Session was precipitately inconsiderate unwise and big with every mischief? For God's sake exert yourself there for to repeal the confiscation and sequestration act of the property of eventual Absentees, it is prima facie impolitick unjust Cruel and dishonorable to the Character of the State. The Treble Tax on the Nonjurers scarse deserves a better Name.

Liberty ought to be constructed (to be permanent) on as broad a basis as possible; and of course to render it the interest of a great body of Citizens to bring about a revolution of the government establish'd is the most glaring of all solacisms. It would be much wiser to banish them at once; besides the oath impos'd, is in such strange terms, and the substance and spirit so horrid and extravagant that perhaps no honest [man] ought to take it, nay, in my opinion it is treasonable to America. We are it seems not only to renounce all obedience to the present King of G. Britain; but we are bound never to put ourselves under the protection, or in other terms never to return to any degree of a state of dependence on any of his Successors—Now it may happen that this Country may be thrown into such anarchy confusion and so torn by Civil Wars that she cannot subsist without the protection of some European Power—It may happen that the house of Bourbon both branches may be the most dangerous and execrable Tyrants, and that the immediate descendant of George the third may be a just and amicable Prince, with every quality requisite for the protector of the oppress'd—Supposing this certainly possible case, I should be glad to know whether every good American must not think it his duty to his country and children, to abjure all connexion with the former, and court the protection of the latter, if the want of wisdom or virtue, and the division or animosities of the respective States should grow to such a height that the aggregate could not preserve its being without calling in some protectors. From these considerations which I am sure you cannot [think] wild or extravagant I must pronounce the oath impos'd to be horrid and insane, and that no conscientious man of any reflection ought to take it. I repeat therefore that I could wish for *your* honor that you would be the first mover for taking of this treble Tax, or at least that a new oath more reasonable and less abhorrent from common sense may be fram'd—You have an excellent model before your eyes almost in simi-

lar circumstances—I mean that impos'd by parliament on the people of England at the revolution—which was simply to renounce the title of King James founded on hereditary rights, and to swear to be good and faithful subjects to the Government de facto establish'd by the consent of the people.

Any recusant to this oath I think ought to be banish'd from the country as an incorrigible Foe to the rights of mankind, and thus if I do not widely mistake, Liberty will be founded on a broad generous basis, which is now almost an inverted Cone.

There are other acts passed daily by the assembly (not indeed on so great a scale) but which are partially destructive to the inhabitants of the state. Virginia is so prodigious an extent that it is scarcely possible to enact any law which should not have its exceptions—For instance, the Law prohibiting the exportation of provisions out of the state may not effect the back counties bordering on no other state or the interior, but to the limits of the Counties and at the same time distant from navigation is absolutely ruinous—Berkly is in this predicament;—We have no Towns to take of our produce; Maryland is our best and only market, when this is stopp'd up to us, our wheat must rot in our Graneries, our beef must be given to the dogs or we must be at the mercy of those high and mighty Lords the Commissaries and subcommissaries who make a most Lordly use of their power and how therefore the inhabitants of Berkley are to cloath themselves and at the same time pay their heavy taxes is above human wisdom to devise; this is a subject worthy *your* serious consideration who are our representatives. There is another very singular hardship we labour under—It is that from want of Police, we are govern'd by laws with which we are totally unacquainted and of course are subject to penalties for our unavoidable ignorance—It is notorious that some laws have pass'd, have been in force and expir'd without the people of Berkley ever receiving the least hint that such laws ever had a being—

this is new in the annals of Society—if it is objected that there is no means of establishing posts and conveying information—the answer is natural and plain, that there is no legitimate efficacy in the government and that the transgressors of laws of which they are ignorant cannot by any rule of justice be bound to the penalties—in fact it is confession that Virginia pretends to govern what she is not able to govern, and that it for the counties remov'd from the seat of government, unless these evils are remedied will be under the necessity of erecting themselves into separat Independencies, unless they prefer absolute anarchy. I think therefore that that the Inhabitants of Berkly have a right to insist that some means of information may be contriv'd of that they may be absolved from the penalties of transgression if transgression is a term in their circumstances that can properly be us'd

[The foregoing is in the handwriting of Lee's secretary, with corrections in his own.]

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MEMORANDUM LIST.

[This paper was used as a wrapper, and is endorsed :  
*Original Papers from the Continental Congress.*]

Capt. Johnston.	Refused.
Capt. Parker.	Received
Capt. Taliaferro	Do.
Capt. Nicholas	Do.
Capt. Mead	Do
Capt. Fountain	Refused.
L <sup>t</sup> Gibbs	On furlow
Lt. Sanford	Received
L <sup>t</sup> Jones	Do

Lt. Willis	Received
L <sup>t</sup> Hoe	Refused
L <sup>t</sup> Dixon	Rec <sup>d</sup>
Lt. Russell	Refused
Lt. Travis	On furlow
L <sup>t</sup> Claiborne	Do.
L <sup>t</sup> Hews	Never been } offered him }
L <sup>t</sup> Marks	
Ensign Harrison	On furlow
	On furlow
	Received
Ensign Hoomes	Do.
Ensign Moore	Do
Ensign Nicholas	Do
Ensign Robinson	Refused.

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DRAFT.

SIR,

I have waited two days impatiently for a Line from you as an introduction to our Correspondence without Effect; and have at last determined to transmit a few Ideas, as they through the gloominess of this day occurred to me, not that I would wish to have them filed among those Letters which are to constitute our future Amusements, nor would I wish them considered as a commencement of our Epistolary correspondence, which would be an impropriety you could not suppose me guilty of as it was to begin with you.

When a man sets down to write he ought well to consider with himself, whether he is possessed with capacity sufficient and adequate to the great purpose of instructing and amusing the World; for as Horace elegantly and emphatically expresses himself, unless the Utile is united with the Dulce, a Writer so far from carrying his point, has fruitlessly expended his Labours and his Oil: but for my own part with deference and Esteem to this great and justly esteemed Classical

Genius, I must confess it appears to me by no means impossible that a man of Letters, Erudition Virtue and integrity of principle may very worthily employ his pen, with the sole view of elucidating veracity, expressing proper sentiments of rectitude, and moral fitness on the tender minds of youth, without being possessed of that happy assemblage of dissonant Ideas which the illustrious Mr. Locke, in his acute and never enough to be admired Language establishes as an uncontrovertible Axiom to the Constitution of Wit; but Mr. Locke was himself with all his wonderfull talents a mere mortal; and it has been judiciously observ'd humanum est erare. It is indeed true that the stoic Philosophers of Antiquity, have established or at least attempted to establish an opinion, that a fortunate Indolence, study, labour, application, exercise & practice will eradicate all frailties (not to speak of the greater vices) from the human mind with not less facility, than that which experience has demonstrated skillful Gardiners to have accomplish'd, in the total extirpation of noxious weeds, which an observer of competent intellect must indubitable allow to be extremely prejudicial to those wholesome fruitfull vegetables, that the great author of Nature, has so munificently provided for the nutriment of man, whom Milton has with his usual sublimity and loftiness of style pronounced to be made after the image of the infinite, invisible, devisable, indevisable and incomprehensible Creator of all things. But when I admit that Milton usually expresses himself with loftiness and sublimity, I beg leave not to be understood that I think him unexceptionably infallible—it is true he possesses the *os magna sonitura*, but he too frequently descends into puerilities or swells into unpardonable fustian and bombast: “And God the Father turns a School divine”—this line of the elegant Mr. Pope without the Shadow of injustice designates Milton's inequality: but even Homer himself sometimes nods aliquando bonus domitat Homerus, though to confess the truth it is far from being clear with me: that



equality of style or even of Sentiment is an excellency. Monotony is always disgustfull—without shade the light would not strike us—if the Sun never set the light would not astonish:—the Greenlanders I have no doubt must be wearied with the perpetual day during the time of the Summer *sostis*: but of this more hereafter: now I am upon the subject of Homer and Milton I cannot refrain from taking notice of the infinite advantages the former had over the later in the superiority of the Greek Language over our barbarous Jargon: however upon further reflection the English Tongue if it can't be called a Language, is so exquisitely copious, rich strong and forcible, nay I am not quite sure that it has not in point of poetry advantages not to be paralleled in any Language either antient or modern: it contains every kind of foot (Wiz' dactyes, spondees, anapests, Iambick, trooches, pecons, fudes, critice and coriambicks: Cicero with that acumen of penetration which forms his characteristics has remark'd that great Orators speak or round their periods in a sort of numbers: though these numbers are not restricted by the absolute positive trammels of versification, this Horace seems to think is the Case of Ditharambic poets who have taken to themselves the License of expaciating in *numerus Legas salutis*—but as I intend to explain fully my meaning on this Subject in a work of six volumes in folio now preparing for the press you cannot take it amiss that I confine myself to those few hints which I have laboured to condense into sentences, without the least attempt towards any flower of rhetoric, and indeed you must plainly perceive my principle aim has been to avoid a single superfluous word or Syllable.

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TO PHILO-JUNIUS. (N<sup>o</sup> 3.)

SIR,

Having demonstrated the variance in political sentiments, M. Wormely enters on a disquisition of the re



spective parliamentary learning of the two writers, as appears from the following extract from his letter :

“Junius was well versed in parliamentary learning, as his letters concerning the decision of the house of commons on the Middlesex election evince. General Lee knew nothing more of parliamentary affairs, or history, than what he collected from reading the debates, and was more ignorant of parliamentary learning, than any man of his general knowledge and opportunity, I ever knew—particularly the case of Middlesex, I remember he did not understand, had never studied it, nor ever read the ablest argument by Rusfhead, under the inspection of Sir Fletcher Norton, “The case of the Middlesex election considered,” before I lent it to him, and said he tho’t it unanswerable.”

Here I feel myself at liberty to assert with confidence, that a man so endowed as General Lee or Junius was, might have figured upon the question of the Middlesex election, in the degree that Junius did ; and yet, at the commencement of the discussion, have been as ignorant of what I suppose M<sup>r</sup> Wormeley terms parliamentary learning, as he pretends General Lee was.

John Wilkes was expelled the 17th February 1769. The house resolved, on the 17th March 1769, that his Election was void. On the 15<sup>th</sup> April, 1769, the house resolved, that the re-election of John Wilkes was void, and that Henry Lawes Luttrell was duly elected.

From the first expulsion of Wilkes, to the 19th July, when Junius appears to have taken up the subject seriously, is a period of five months ; in all which time the master spirits of the Nation, on both sides, had been engaged in examining the history of parliament, in hunting up precedents, in arguing of the question, and in publishing of their opinions ; so that all the materials of his argument were ready furnished to his hand, by the labor and learning of others, nothing remained for him but to mould these materials into a certain form, to shape their direction, and to give them the lustre of a figurative and splendid diction. Junius therefore,

might, or might not, have been a man well versed in parliamentary learning, in any other respect, than as it relates to that single question.

I cannot suppose that when M<sup>r</sup> Wormely says, General Lee was ignorant of parliamentary learning, he would be understood to mean only that he was deficient in a knowledge of the rules of debate, the order of making motions, and the method of proceeding to make statutes in the house, any more than I can suppose, when he charges General Lee with ignorance of the Law, he would be understood to mean only, that he was ignorant of the leading process in a law suit, that he did not understand the technical forms required in preparing a cause for trial. If contrary to my supposition, his meaning should be confined to ignorance in these points of learning, they in either or in both of the instances would be readily ceded—For, that sort of learning is generally obtained by practice; and it does not appear that General Lee had any such opportunity of acquiring it. And though it may be considered indispensable in the qualifications of a Senator, or professional lawyer, the total absence of it, would go but a very little way towards the establishment of his ignorance of the constitution of parliament, or of law in general: since, the great Montesquieu himself has acknowledged that he never could understand the process of a law suit, notwithstanding, his application to the subject, from which, we may presume, he would have been equally puzzled and confounded, in an attempt to give an Account of the rules of debate, the order of making Motions, &c in parliament.

I understand M<sup>r</sup> Wormely to mean by Parliamentary learning, a competent Knowledge of the history of parliament and of the laws, customs, and privileges which, taken together constitute and compose, not only, the constitution of parliament, but one of the most essential and powerful members of the British Constitution.

If M<sup>r</sup> Wormely had not, in a tone sufficiently positive, asserted it to be a fact, within his present recol-

lection and knowledge, that General Lee was so entirely deficient in the learning which relates to the customs and privileges of parliament, that he did not, even understand the question which arose between the ministry and the Opposition, on the expulsion of Wilkes, and, that on a perusal of the argument on the Ministerial side of that question, he pronounced the reasoning unanswerable. From the time which has elapsed since M<sup>r</sup> Wormley saw and conversed with General Lee on these topics, and from the proneness of the human mind, to confound one object, thing, or person, with another, review through so frail a medium as memory, at so great a distance of time, I should incline to the belief, that the recollection of M<sup>r</sup> Wormley had bestowed on General Lee, an ignorance of Parliamentary learning, and an opinion of the reasoning employed in the Ministerial argument, which, in truth, and of right, belonged to the attainments and judgment of some other person of that day, with whom he associated.

For M<sup>r</sup> Wormley tells us, he recollects from the letters of Junius, that the writer was well versed in Parliamentary learning. He also says, there is no resemblance between the style of General Lee and Junius, except, where he manifestly aims at imitating of him. Now if General Lee had ever read and studied the composition of Junius, until his style betrayed the fondness of the imitator, one would be apt to conclude, that he could not have been ignorant of the parliamentary learning which the discussion of the case of the Middlesex election displays, in such abundance, that the extensive parliamentary learning of Junius is inferred from it. Besides, the General must surely have been a very great dunce, not to have understood the question in the case, after a single perusal of the letters of Junius.

It may also be observed, that General Lee was, by birth and education an Englishman—and we gather from his letters and essays, that the love of his own country had ever been an active and vigorous sentiment

in his soul. For in every situation, even to the close of his life, where the liberty or the rights of the British people, or the honor or the interest of the nation are in question, or the theme, the love of his country appears to warm his mind, inspire his actions, and to vivify his writings.

Some circumstance acting on his sensibility in early life, or perhaps an original propensity in the constitution of his temper, at the age of manhood, had replenished his mind with the most furious and enthusiastic republican ideas, conceits, and whimsies.

What he afterwards experienced from the conduct of Kings, ministers and courtiers, and their corrupt, arbitrary and tyrannical practices and proceedings, had turned every sentiment of his soul, to a felled and implacable hatred of them—and to a determined, persevering hostility against regal and arbitrary governments of every denomination and description.

To a mind like his, ever in a glow, from the fire of liberty in his heart, what an interesting period of the British history, must that have been, which gave birth to the House of Commons! Destined, in process of time, to change the government of his native country, from an aristocratical and regal tyranny, to a republican and popular form.

On the one hand, how often must he not have been agitated by the alternate succession of compassion and apprehension for its weakness—and on the other, by the strongest feelings of resentment and desire of revenge, against the oppressors of its youth? While he was tracing the rise and progress of the house of commons, from the first dawnings of its feeble existence, in the reign of Edward the first, to the meridian splendor of its power and authority, finally established, at the revolution of 1688.

If the foregoing picture of his mind express a faithful likeness of its master principles, affections and aversions, while we keep in view the prevailing influence which those passions have in forming our opinions,

and in directing our inquiries and studies, it will be scarcely possible to conceive, that after a perusal of the argument on the ministerial side of the question that arose between the Ministry and the Opposition, on the expulsion of Wilkes, he should entertain so exalted an opinion of the reasoning as to pronounce it unanswerable; or that he should have been so ignorant of the constitutional rights and privileges of the house of commons, brought in question by that discussion, that he could not comprehend the merits of the question—or that he was ignorant of parliamentary learning in general.

For, in the first place, his settled hatred of the ministry, enlivened by the object being presented in the act of disfranchising twelve hundred of his fellow Citizens, must have been repressed before a single argument employed on the Ministerial side of the question could find a passage to his understanding. And, we are furnished with no reason for the slightest presumption that any circumstance, attended the lending, or the perusal of the argument by Ruffhead, by which this effect might have been produced. Besides, when we are told by Mr Wormely, that he was learned, a scholar, a man of belle lettres, and an historian, conceiving the love of country to have been his ruling passion—in the transactions, events, laws, constitution and government of what other country of the World, do we expect to find him so learned, and so clearly entitled to the character of an historian, as in those of his own native country—when some portion of this historical knowledge might, at most, be said to be born with him.

Admitting that he had attained to so high a degree of excellence in knowledge of the English history, as to merit the title of historian, we cannot except parliamentary learning—or a thorough understanding of the elements of the constitution of parliament, particularly the popular branch, the house of commons, without a seeming absurdity and flagrant derogation from the

opinions we have formed of his principles, and the determination which his passions would give to his enquiries and studies, since, in acquiring that degree of knowledge, he must of course become well acquainted, and even familiar with the Causes, events, and facts, which produced and established the laws, customs, and privileges of the house of Commons.

Suppose M<sup>r</sup> Wormely had the direction of the education of a young friend, or a son, who was as ignorant of parliamentary learning, as he pretends General Lee was, but who had the ambition of becoming wise and learned in this article; would he not direct him, as the most certain method of acquiring an accurate and precise knowledge of the constitution of the house of Commons, to study it, in the accounts given by historians of the causes, events, and facts which gave rise to the laws, customs and privileges which form the elements in which the principles of its constitution reside. Where else, I would ask, did M<sup>r</sup> Wormely himself acquire the learning by which he ascertained General Lee's deficiency? And when his pupil could from reflection, explain the events, account for the causes, and describe the facts, and trace each fundamental law, custom and privilege of the house of commons up to them, as to so many small fountains from whence they had been drawn, united and directed, to flow into the main stream of the British Constitution, would he not pronounce him to be learned in parliamentary history and affairs? And we have seen, that General Lee had the strongest of all motives to engage him, early in life, to examine, with the most eager attention, those causes and events, and the consequences resulting from them.

The struggles, of the house of commons, against the violent efforts of the prerogatives of the crown, have furnished the historian with the greatest part of the materials for the history of the house of Stuart. With the transactions of that eventful period of the British story, in which the rising spirit of the commons first



seemed to be conscious of its power, general Lee was assuredly well acquainted. For he appears to have set himself the task of removing the false glosses, refuting the tenets and of exposing the pernicious tendency of the principles, displayed and maintained by M<sup>r</sup> Hume, in his history of the conduct and transactions of the reigns of the house of Stuart, whom he considered as the corrupt apologist of the princes of that line. In an attempt to account for the pious regard and compassion which many, even at this day, feel and express, on a recollection of the fate of Charles the first; General Lee, in a piece styled a Political Essay, page 81 of his memoirs, thus characterizes M<sup>r</sup> Hume.

“ But although the singularity of Charles’s destiny, the prejudices fostered by the pious care of our nurses and the clergy, have greatly contributed to the false light in which his conduct, morals and general character are seen, it could not have operated so wonderfully alone: the address and sophistry of a succession of our corrupt citizens have been set at work to co-operate in misleading our judgment and blinding our understanding; and of this tribe the pre-eminence must indisputably be given to Mr. David Hume; for the pompous sanctity (as I think it may be termed) of Clarendon, the more than priestly fury of Carte, much less the pert patchwork of Smollet, or the drivelling of poor Goldsmith, could not have wrought any mighty miracles. But with Hume, the case is different. The philosophical or rather sceptical character of the man, antecedent to his appearance as an historian, and officiousness of style, render him so infinitely more dangerous than his fellow laborers, that it is much to be lamented that some person (for instance a Lord Littleton) eminent for parts and learning, has not thought it worth his while, professedly (but I would have it compendiously, for a reason I shall hereafter give) to expose to public view the incongruities artifices and pernicious intention of this Sophist.”

Two pages further on, in the same essay, after de-

scribing Charles the First as a tyrant in principle and actions and those who labor to reconcile us to the character and conduct of this prince, as being engaged to extinguish the Spirit of liberty, he expresses his desire of exposing the artifice and false colouring of M<sup>r</sup> Hume's history in the following terms :

“ For these considerations I purpose to offer to the public, hereafter, some cursory remarks on M<sup>r</sup> Hume's history of the two first Stuarts. If they are well received, I shall continue them through the reigns of the two last. If they have, in any degree, the effect I could wish, I shall think myself amply recompensed, the only recompence which I can promise myself. I cannot hope for any glory from the composition ; the little reading which a soldier can snatch up at intervals will scarcely qualify him to reap laurels in the field of literature ; and it will easily be believed, that the sentiments which I avow, will not procure a place or a pension.”

Now, it is not to be believed, that if General Lee had ever qualified himself for this undertaking, by a course of study and meditation, by collating the facts and events, by investigating the causes and consequences of the different transactions of the reigns of the princes of the house of Stuart, that he could have been ignorant of parliamentary history or learning. Since almost the whole of the domestic conduct and proceedings of those reigns, turn upon some incident, in the management of the negotiations, stipulations and agreements, between the prince and the house of commons. They, anxious to guard their growing power from the depredations of the prerogative ; and he, ready and eager to insinuate at every opening, neither of the contracting, or rather contending parties could be brought to keep engagements with the other. And it is equally incredible, that a man of Gen. Lee's general acquirements understanding, pride and discernment, should propose to himself the task of refuting M<sup>r</sup> Hume, with the least promising likelihood of success, but upon a



proud consciousness, that he was possessed of every kind of talent and knowledge essential to his purpose.

SCALIGER.

*Endorsed*: Copy of Scaliger, N<sup>o</sup> 3, as it was printed in the Virginia Gazette and copied from that paper.

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FROM DANIEL CARTHY TO WILLIAM GODDARD. 1

Newbern, 16th. January, 1811.

DEAR SIR,

I beg leave to present my most sincere and cordial acknowledgments to you, for the box containing Parcels of General Lee's papers and original manuscripts which I have just received by a vessel from New York.

I have, as yet, only slightly and hastily run the papers over, merely to see what character they bore. I am a little disappointed, in finding so few papers and memorials of his transactions, before he came to America. I had strong hopes, that from his memorandum Books and Letters, I should be able to account for the manner of his spending his time from the year 1768, when I have reason to believe he left the Polish service to the fall of 1773, when he embarked for America. I have already gone far enough into the examination, to become satisfied, that in this, I shall be baulked.

The first and great object is, to prove beyond all doubt, that he really did compose the letters signed Junius—that matter accomplished, and every scrap of his composition, any detail of his conduct and life would be eagerly sought, extended memoirs of him would sell rapidly and at any price. my adversaries say he was at Warsaw in January, 1769, when the letters of Junius began, and continued at Warsaw until the fall of that year, whenever they put this fact beyond all further question, I must relinquish my

hypothesis. for it is impossible by any human contrivance of despatch, to have received and returned answers to Sir William Draper and others, in London, with such rapidity from Warsaw. Yet from facts and the proofs of identity between General Lee and Junius, which I have accumulated, it should seem almost equally impossible that General Lee should not have been the writer of the letters signed Junius. the first good opportunity by water, I will send you some of these proofs. In the mean time, I hope, you will find the request I am about to make, neither oppressive nor impertinent, that you will add, to the favors already conferred, answers to the following queries, where you can, and transmit them to me by post as soon as your convenience and leisure will permit: *and* any other information that you may, be in possession of, and, feel that it would *relieve* the *wants* and *distresses* of my *hypothesis*.

First. Has M<sup>r</sup> Goddard any information, by anecdote, letter or otherwise, of the place where, and manner of General Lee's spending his time in the year 1769. In his confession of the fact of authorship of the letters of Junius to M<sup>r</sup> T. Rodney, he says he was on the Continent most of the time while these letters were publishing for fear of accidental discovery or detection.

Second. Did General Lee ever talk freely with his friend Goddard on the subject of the letters of Junius? did General Lee seem inquisitive, about the writer, and was he fond of quoting the sentiments, opinions, invectives, lively turns, and beauties of expression, found in the writings of Junius—or did he seem habitually reserved on the subject? in all his productions I find not the slightest allusion to Junius.

Third. When General Lee returned from Portugal, it is said in the third page of his memoirs, he had a friend and Patron high in office, one of the principal secretaries of State—does M<sup>r</sup> Goddard know the name of this Patron high in office?

Fourth. It is said page 2<sup>d</sup> of his memoirs that General Lee wrote a pamphlet, in favor of America, about the year 1762, which Doctor Franklin and other Americans highly extolled and approved: has M<sup>r</sup> Goddard ever seen this pamphlet and could he put M<sup>r</sup> C. in the way of obtaining a sight of it?

Fifth. M<sup>r</sup> Ralph Wormly, in his letter to T. Rodny asserts that General Lee was utterly ignorant of Parliamentary History and did not even understand the question of the Middlesex election: does M<sup>r</sup> Goddard know or believe this to be the fact or not?

Sixth. Several of the papers in the box, not published in the Memoirs, have "Copied" written on the backs of them: has M<sup>r</sup> Goddard any information where those copies now are?

I wish to God, I could be with you a fortnight and so far engage your feelings and good opinion, that you would find a pleasure in my society, it would hardly afford me an opportunity of asking the questions for information, which every moment start up in my mind. The papers shall all be honorably returned. At present I cannot say how valuable they may be to me. More of this hereafter. I have sent for Thomas' History of printing. it is an out of the way place to look for Biographical Sketches and anecdotes of General Lee. I thank you for the kind attention in sending the two providence Gazettes containing the two Numbers on Junius—as soon as they appeared my attention was called to them by some remarks in the Norfolk ledger and I procured the papers, through our member of Congress—they are sensible well written Numbers—but quite beside the Cushion in ascribing the letters to Gibbon. I have not yet perused the Manuscript, that came with the Gazettes.

Your obliged affectionate friend,

DAN. CARTHY.

*Endorsed*: From M<sup>r</sup> Carthy to W. G.

FROM DANIEL CARTHY TO MAJOR THOMAS COLES.

Newbern 21<sup>st</sup> March, 1811.

DEAR SIR,

I had the pleasure to receive your very agreeable letter of the 27th February by last post.

Please inform M<sup>r</sup> Goddard that through the medium of Judge Tarriston, I have written a letter to Joseph Mingheni, General Lee's humble friend. I have also written to Major Edwards, who resides in Charleston, South Carolina. indeed, I have letters in pursuit of information flying in all directions, east west north and south. I expect the interests of the work I am concerned in, will oblige me to make a tour through Virginia and to Charleston, every day I get hold of some rare and before hidden Clew leading to bright and interesting matter for my biography and hypothesis—therefore your impatience must not want the discretion to allow me to avail of full time and opportunity to make my work as entire as possible.

The Name and revolutionary services and merits of General Lee have been most shamefully sunk and neglected by the inattention of our Countrymen. it is my aim to raise and establish them in their proper station of honor and celebrity.

You give me such an high idea of the literary taste, talents, and accomplishments of M<sup>rs</sup> Goddard, that, although I should dread her censures, I could wish to be near her, that my work might receive the preenings of her criticism and the stamp of her approbation.

When I mentioned to your friends here, that I had received a letter from you, they enquired after you affectionately. Capt. Taylor, I have not had an opportunity of seeing. he still holds his office, but has had a great deal of trouble. I shall mention your recollection of him when I see him.

Without doubt you and M<sup>r</sup> Goddard have read Knickerbocker's history of New York—a work of such

wit and humour could hardly have escaped you. last fall a friend of mine was going to New York. he asked me the common place question, whether I had any commands. I answered none, unless he should meet Diedrick Knickerbocker in his travels, in which event, I entreated him not to forget to present my respects and acknowledgments for the very great pleasure I had received from a perusal of his incomparable History of New York, my native Country. My friend replied that it would be much more respectful and complimentary to the historian to convey such acknowledgments and assurances myself, in a letter. I told him in reply I would, if he would be the bearer of it—he answered certainly. Accordingly I wrote the letter which you will find, published at Philadelphia Thursday morning, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 1811, in the United States' Gazette N<sup>o</sup> 1014, signed Rulif, Harmanus Albert, Vanderwerken: dated from harbour Island, Cartent County, North Carolina, 13th November 1810, and directed to Diedrick Knickerbocker, Esquire, scagticoke, State of New-York.

You will recollect this Harbour Island—it has become the residence of Colonel Tatham whom you have some reason for knowing pretty well. he has attracted some sort of notice by his writings to engage the gentry of Newbern to make this Island their summer residence. the printer has made a great number of mortifying blunders—he has it, “in *pain*, at the ball of an Austrian ambassador”—I wrote *paris*, again, “on the subject of the course and *terms* of my eventful story.” I wrote *Turns*. again “I must *go* to Vanantwerps-falls,” I must *return* to Vanantwarps-falls. again “a temper not easily *distressed*,” I wrote, a temper not easily *depressed*, and about forty more of such mistakes.

[*Here occurs a large blank in the original.*]

The secret of my being the writer of this letter has been confined to the friend who carried it to Philadel-

phia and two other friends—and I hope you will limit it to Mr Goddard and yourself. I am afraid Mrs Goddard should read it. if she does, she will discover without your assuring her, that it was written rapidly without much care. You have flattered my daughter Killy exceedingly. She is studying how to return your gracious turns of expression in her praise. all our family salute you and Mrs Coles in terms of respectful and warm friendship.

Your old friend & affectionate humble Serv<sup>t</sup>

DAN. CARTHY.

I have a thousand other things to say—one cannot say every thing in one sheet. Newbern March 23.

Major Thomas Coles, Providence, Rhode Island  
*p. Mail.*

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#### FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Newbern 15<sup>th</sup> April

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I hardly can tell myself, how it has happened, that I have delayed writing to you so great a length of time. Assuredly not from any motive of indifference about you, or a want of respect, esteem, or affection. Thoughts of you and my neglect of you have stung me, more or less every day, with self reproaches. Mrs Carthy too has been your incessant and bitter avenger. Still the performance of the task by which I could easily clear myself was put off: and still the difficulties of it accumulated until I began to despair, when a trifling incident seemed for a moment to render it quite easy. eating some of the excellent cheese and drinking some of the delicious cyder you sent Capt. Taylor, in company with our friend Woods and some other gentlemen—and talking a great deal of you and accusing myself in the most unsparing manner to those gentlemen, for

neglecting to write to you so long—it seemed as if I had entitled myself to your pardon; or, rather, as if, in an evening chit chat, I had told you the whole story, why I had not sent forward the letter of Thanks to our worthy and excellent friend Goddard; and delayed to communicate to you the reason why I had against my promise suspended it, and that you had said, O! never mind, let us hear no more about that, do better for future and everything will be forgiven. Coming away from Capt. Taylor's in the cheer of mind, and lightness of heart which a sort of Consciousness of this imagined explanation had inspired, I determined to write that moment. taking up the pen, however, the old difficulties occurred—the necessity of some apology was too importunate to be slighted or passed by—the task was again postponed—I have now, therefore, determined not to say one word about apology—concluding and hoping that you will think and would have thought at any time writing the best apology.

Capt. Taylor has had the misfortune to draw upon himself the enmity and resentment of almost all his neighbours at Portsmouth. you well know what a set they are, and you know, too, that he has always, in part from necessity and in part from his natural temper, been a little tyrannical and overbearing with them. A number of them have combined against him. their object being to oust him from his office—some of them from motives of spite and resentment—others on a hope that they may obtain the office for themselves. to this end they have framed a parcel of charges, certainly frivolous and most of them futile in their very nature—and which he will prove to be malicious, false, and groundless. these charges they have sent forward to the secretary of the Treasury who has ordered an investigation of them, and appointed a commissioner for that purpose. Mr Mayo the Commissioner appointed is now sitting on the investigation—should you have occasion to write to the Secretary of the Treasury, and your subject should easily admit of your introducing the name



of Taylor—I know from what he has said to me on the very subject, he would think it not only a gracious thing—but, an honor done to him, to speak of his character, his family—his method and manner of conducting the business of his office; the set he has to act with—the reputation of integrity which he justly enjoys among his friends—in short to speak of him, and of all these things and difficulties as you saw them and know them to exist from your experience and the opportunity you had to observe upon them—poor fellow, he suffers the affair to make too deep an impression on his mind—the vexation which, at times, he indulges in stops little short of the appearance of distraction—he has strong feelings, an high sense of honor—and to have that honor attacked, in a point, where from the nature of the attack and defence, even should the assailants be routed under every circumstance of shame and disgrace, still it cannot be preserved entire and pure as if no attack had been made is a reflection to a nice and Jealous honor, infinitely tormenting.

By a review in the British Critic for the month of September, 1807—If I am not greatly deceived, the essays I published in the Virginia Gazette to prove that General Lee wrote the letters of Junius, have fallen into the hands of some person in England who has published them in the form of a pamphlet with some additional matter and arguments. I am convinced that the principal part of the reasoning is taken from my papers. though the reviewers will not admit, that General Lee was Junius, yet they concede two of the main propositions that I laboured in these essays to establish—That the law knowledge Junius had was but superficial, such as an intelligent well educated mind might easily pick up in a very short time, from Jacob and Blackstone; and that Junius was a military man of high rank, great talents, but disappointed and mortified. The daring character of General Lee's mind they urge against the probability of his being the writer—yet the daring character of General Lee's mind, and the daring



spirit which marks the Temper or cast of the mind which produced the letters—I have urged as a strong evidence in favor of General Lee's claim—Again they say, “if General Lee was Junius, he had no sufficient motive for carefully concealing of it to the day of his death.” Was not General Lee's fortune of nine hundred pounds sterling in the power of the British Government to the day of his death? were not the Duke of Grafton—Colonel, Sir William Draper, and twenty others still living at the day of his death—who would each have had a dagger at his throat, in a very short time, even in America, after he should have had the weakness and folly to have avowed or acknowledged the letters: and his whole fortune soon swallowed up in actions, informations, and attachments for slander &c—do these considerations and twenty others equally strong, furnish no motives strong enough for anxious and scrupulous concealment—if General Lee was rash and daring he knew how to be so—he knew how and when to temper these qualities with discretion—he was not a vain conceited coxcomb and fool; and to have declared the fact of his being the Author of the letters, publicly, or without reserve, would, certainly, have been a striking instance of the last degree of human infirmity and folly—General Lee never gave such an instance to the world—though he was guilty of many rash and inconsiderate things—yet they all bore the sterling stamp of the eccentricities of genius on them: they were elevated a thousand degrees above folly, or importunate vanity—though the London Pamphleteer has committed a robbery on me, yet I am so proud of having gained an ally that I excuse him. I have still the long letter I wrote M<sup>r</sup> Goddard by me—the reason I did not send it was that I expected to see him until late in the fall—and I thought I would see him first. I hope to have the pleasure to take you by the hand, in Providence, in the course of the Summer. I am extremely anxious to peruse the papers still remaining in the possession of M<sup>r</sup> Goddard, for reasons I will explain

to you and him—All our family, send you and Mrs. Cole the friendly and affectionate greetings of old friends and acquaintances. I have sent for the pamphlet and as soon as I obtain a sight of it, if it should appear worthy of it, I will send it with my better to you and Mr Goddard, should an opportunity offer.

Your old friend and affectionate humble servt

DAN. CATHY.

Major Coles.

Apl. 10. Major Thomas Cole, Providence, Rhode Island.

*Pr Mail.*

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DRAFT.

TREATY OF ALLIANCE, Friendship and Commerce, made and concluded upon the      Day of 1783, BETWEEN THOMAS HARTLEY Esquire, Councillor and acting Attorney for the state in the Middle Department—Councillor & attorney of the supreme Court and of the several courts of Common Pleas of Pennsylvania, Proctor in the Orphans Courts and Registers Courts of the same state &c &c &c Plenipotentiary and ambassador extraordinary from the Honorable the Gentlemen of the Bar of the Houses of Lancaster and York of the One Part, and M<sup>r</sup> James Pollock one of the most ancient citizens, one of the firm supporters of the Rights and Liberties of America      under the Right honorable Edmond Hoyle, Esq., and chief & freeholder of the Borough of Carlisle, of the other Part.

*Whereas* it has been found by Experience (notwithstanding the insinuations of some surly Divines to the contrary) that a moderate Degree of good Eating and drinking as well as rest, tend to make Life comfortable and Happy, and it is the wish of the High Contracting Parties to communicate reciprocal Benefits to each

other, it is therefore stipulated and agreed as follows, viz.

The said James Pollock to find good meat drink and Lodging at a reasonable Price for ready money or weekly Payments—Forrage to be laid in at proper seasons for the Horses, and they are not to be watered more than three Times a Day.

No wine superior to London particular to be introduced without the Consent of all Parties—no cards to be used but those of the best kind—no game of whist to be begun after twelve oclock at night.

The high Contracting Parties to behave with the utmost civility to each other.

Accidental Faults to be overlooked, or slightly censured, but those of a gross sort (if from the frailty of human nature any such should be committed) are to be severely marked.

Too much liberty must not be admitted.

A vinegar countenance not to stay above one Hour in the House.

Should the good sense of the Freeholders of Carlisle direct them to elect the said James Pollock a Burgess, it is expected that he will not take any extraordinary airs upon himself in consequence of such Elevation.

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#### EXTRACT OF A LETTER TO GENERAL LEE.

“Happening to mention before the Governor and Lord Edgecomb that in case of Gibraltar being attack’d by sea, Howitzers would be of great service, as I did not imagine any ships side proof against a ten inch shell fir’d point-blank or at a small elevation with a full charge of powder; which being thought impossible by most present, it was agreed to try the experiment: accordingly a Target of about six feet square of equal strength and resistance with the strongest part of our largest men of war’s sides, was made, & was just

Three feet thick of solid fir Timber. We fir'd at it out of a sea Service 10 inch Howitzer at 150 yards & with 10lb of powder.

"The shell went thro' the very centre of the object and entered five feet into a solid bank of Sand behind it."

Quere, much Honoured sir, might not the bursting of shells under the Decks of a 64 or 44 Gun ship occasion some confusion on board such ships.

Major General Lee, at New York.

*Endorsed*: Extract of a letter from the Commandg Officer of Artillery at Gibralter.

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DRAFT—IMPERFECT.

[This commences imperfectly at page 9 of the letter book.]

. . . go, I had once a thought of supplicating one of these great Elks or Buffaloes that run to the westward to make me a grant of a Hundred thousand acres: I could prove he had brushed the weeds with his tail and run fifty miles. I wonder if Congress or the different states would recognize the Claim. I am so far from thinking the Indians have right to the soil that not having made a better use of it for many hundred years, I conceive they have forfeited all pretence to claim and ought to be driven from it.

With regard to forming treaties or making peace with this race, these are my ideas: They have the shapes of men and may be of the human species; but certainly in their present state, they approach nearer the character of Devils—take an Indian: is there any faith in him? can you bind him by favours? can you

trust his word, or confide in his promise? When he makes war upon you, when he takes you prisoner, and has you in his power, will he spare you? In this he departs from the law of nature by which according to Baron Montesquieu, and every other man who thinks on the subject, it is unjustifiable to take away the life of him who submits; the conqueror in doing otherwise becomes a murderer, who ought to be put to death. On this principle are not the whole Indian nations murderers? many of them may have not had an opportunity of putting prisoners to death, but the sentiment which they entertain, leads them invariably to do this, when they have it in their power or judge it expedient: their principles constitute them murderers, and they ought to be prevented from carrying them into execution, as we would prevent a common homicide who should be mad enough to conceive himself justifiable in Killing men.

The tortures which they exercise on the bodies of their prisoners, justify extermination. Gelo of Syracuse made war on the Carthaginians, because they offered up human victims; and made peace with them on condition, they would cease from this unnatural and cruel superstition. If we could have any faith in the Savages, I would suffer them to live, provided they would no longer make War amongst themselves or against others by Lurking privately on the pathways of the wood, and putting unarmed and defenceless inhabitants to death, or attacking women and children in the frontier families, and on their ceasing in the mean [time] to exercise torture.

I do not know but I ought to recal my words, and say that even reforming from these practices they ought not to live. These notions are so degenerate from the life of man, so devoid of every sentiment of generosity, so prone to every vicious excess of passion, so faithless and incapable of civilization, that it is dangerous to the good order of the World that they should exist in it. Why was it that a stream of fire was sent to burn up

Sodom and Gomorrah—or some years before a deluge of water to wash the old world, but that the evil example of wicked men and horrid deeds might be struck from the knowledge and memory of the World? Why was it that the Canaanites were sentenced to extirpation, but because their rights and practices rendered them unfit to live? With what zeal did that good Man Samuel hew Agag in pieces?—With the same zeal ought every whig in America to hew the Big Pipe, or the Big Rattlesnake, or any of these, yeleft by whatever name, wherever he can find them. It may be said the Israelites had an order from the Lord to put to death the Canaanites. I think when we see men by their practice murderers by every Sentiment & principle of heart carried on to shed blood privately; it is a sufficient Order to exterminate the whole brood. As the Seceder said to Satan, what will you make of them, my beloved, but ill, vile, evil devils.

There have been instances of several of these Creatures that have been taken young from the woods, & put to Public Schools in America: I do not know who has even by these means been rendered a useful Member of society: they retain the temper of their race. I knew one of these a certain John Mentour, who had been educated at one of the Northern Seminaries, taught Greek & Latin, and in this war dignified by Congress with a Commission of Captain. No greater Savage ever existed. He had murdered several of his own people & being obliged to avoid the resentment of their relations, had fled from one place to another, and at last joined our Arms at Fort Pitt. I saw this man with the bloody scalp of an Indian in his hand, which he had thus taken off, having first tomhawked the creature, though submitting & praying for his Life. The Indian had been for some time. . . .

## FRAGMENT OF A JOURNAL. JUNE 6. 1778

13th. I arrived at Fredrick Town some time before sunset & spent the Evening in a very agreeable manner at M<sup>r</sup> Morris' Tavern.

14<sup>th</sup>. After breakfast I walked round this Town, which appears to be well situated, & then sat off, crossed the mountains by 4 o'clock & got to Hagers Town.

Miles, about 6. The soil for agriculture is excellent from Frederick Town to the Mountains & after crossing the first ridge called Catoctin, it is well adapted to Wheat, 'till we come to the last ridge called the blue Ridge or South Mountain, After this is passed we came into the extensive Vally called Conocohegue, which is doubtless one of the most fertile spots in this Country & capable of being constantly manured by the Limestone which is seen here in great abundance.

15<sup>th</sup>. We left Hager's Town about half an hour after 4 o'clock in the morning, and by Eight passed the End of the North Mountain, where we breakfasted at one Colonel Rawling's, who behaved with great freedom and hospitality. In the evening we arrived at a place called the fifteen Mile Run, having travelled this day fifty Miles. The soil from Hagers Town to the End of the North Mountain is remarkably fine, but afterwards very broken—The banks of the River Potowmack are equal to any Lands in fertility, but they are very narrow & of small moment when brought into competition with the amazing hills which are presenting themselves on all sides to the Eye & altogether useless in Agriculture.

16th. Left the fifteen Mile Run about 5 o'clock in the Morning & arrived at a M<sup>r</sup> Gwins about 6 o'clock in the Evening, Miles. Here we met with good accommodation, plenty of Venison & a few bottles of wine. The Country still broken & only the small vallies between the stupenduous Mountains Tillable, the Banks of Potowmack excepted which are not seen after we leave Cumberland.



17<sup>th</sup> Left M<sup>r</sup> Gwyn's about 5 o'clock in the morning, & travelled about 35 miles, the Country still Mountainous & the roads extremely bad, that with difficulty we got two miles an hour; the tall Cedars & remarkable Fertility of the soil in some Spots were all that we saw worth noting.

18<sup>th</sup> We proceeded on our Journey, left the Crossings, and got clear of the Mountains about two o'clock; one of my Horses being lame, I became apprehensive we should not be able to reach Fort Pitt the next day; however we travelled thirty two miles & half, & arrived at a M<sup>r</sup> Freemans—here our Accommodations were very indifferent for we could get scarce anything either for man or horse & paid nine shillings per bushel for Oates. Our beds quite bad & could not not sleep the whole night for the numerous Insects which infested us—

19<sup>th</sup>—Set off this morning about 4 oclok & arrived at the Yohogany (Monongehalia) a little after noon; the wind being high we could not induce the Ferryman to venture over the River—about four o'clock P. M. it began to abate, when I crossed leaving my servant & his Horse & baggage at the Ferry. I proceeded on till I got within two Miles of Fort Pitt, but night approaching & the roads quite bad, I was under the necessity of taking up my Quarters at a little Cabin (in short I saw no other buildings in this part of the World) Here I could get no bed, so I wrapped myself in my great Coat & made a Pillow of my saddle Bags; both yesterday and to-day we lived on nothing but Rye bread w<sup>ch</sup> we qualified w<sup>th</sup> some Whiskey.

20<sup>th</sup> This morning when I wanted my horse, I was told he had broke out of the pasture & was not to be found; but from the miserable Appearance of everything around me, I concluded he was stolen. I then took up my saddle Bags, & walked to the Ferry opposite to Fort Pitt, where I immediately got a passage over the River.

After refreshing myself at the Tavern I walked to



take a view of the little Town of Pittsburgh; it is indeed a pleasant Situation, on a Point at the Confluence of the Allegany and Yohogany Rivers, the former is much the strongest stream & always clear, the latter always muddy. I thought the Fort to be a good piece of Work, but at the same time of little or no use, being commanded by very high hills on every side. When I returned to the Tavern I found several young Traders from Baltimore who were waiting to go down the River to the Kentucky Settlement; Several Indians also from the Indian shore came here, and seemed to be much alarmed on account of the Lands ceded to America by the Treaty of Peace: they said these Lands belonged to them, and as they were never in possession of the English Nation, they could have no right to dispose of their property. They should therefore expect that the Americans would purchase these Lands of them before they sent any People to make Settlements over the River.

21<sup>st</sup>. This day, contrary to my expectations, my horse was brought to Town by a Countryman, which made me a little easy in my mind, otherwise I should have been under some difficulty & subject to great imposition if I had been obliged to buy one at this place.

I observed the Banks of the Youhogany River were well stored with Coal, which served both the Town & Garrison, the Gardens & Orchard of the latter displayed some taste.

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#### EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM WILLIAMSBURG.

The Ececutive Council and the house of Assembly of this state have each lately given us but a melancholy sample of their moderation and talents for Government. They have indeed open'd to us a very dreary prospect of what We are to expect when affairs uncontroul'd by any other Power—the former has in violation of the Capitulation of Fort St. Vincents by which

the Commander and Garrison surrender'd themselves Prisoners of War, thrown the Governor with two others loaded with irons into a dungeon—whatever might have been the previous cruelties of this M<sup>r</sup> Hamilton the Council cou'd not consistently with the laws of Nations and the usages of War retrospect beyond the Capitulation—but at any rate what is this Council of Virginia that They are to erect themselves into a tribunal by which the merits or demerits of the Prisoners of War to the United States are to be try'd? the War with G. Britain is carried on in the name and by the authority of the United States, not in the name of Virginia or any other state—the Cartel for the exchange of Prisoners has been settled by the English General and the Congress—but from the reasoning and conduct of these Gentlemen We must be apt to conclude there is not only some great War carried on betwixt G. Britain and the Aggregate of America, but thirteen smaller subordinate Wars betwixt G. Britain and each state distinctly—of course We ought to have fourteen different cartels for the exchange and treatment of Prisoners—We will suppose a case. We will suppose that the Tories or Refugees of N. York—shou'd raise a fund and form themselves into a Body for the King's service—They make an incursion into the Jerseys and by surprise surround the room where the Governor and Council of that State are sitting, who are under the necessity of surrendering themselves Prisoners of War but not without a formal Capitulation. They are carried to N. York and by order of M<sup>r</sup> Tryon, the Mayor of the City and a few Aldermen, who We will suppose are the Executive Council of the Tories the Governor and one or two of the Council are notwithstanding the Capitulation manacled and thrown into a dungeon Congress We must naturally suppose wou'd remonstrate with the English General on this conduct as irregular and iniquitous—to which remonstrance if Sir Henry Clinton was gravely to answer that the prisoners were not the Kings Prisoners but of the Tories of N. York

—I believe it cannot be doubted but that every paper on the continent wou'd flame with indignations against so low and scandalous an evasion.

But the measures of the House of Assembly are still more unjust violent and absurd, perhaps it wou'd not be extravagant to say they are treasonable to the United States—as they throw insuperable impediments to any peace even the most salutary and glorious to the Community at large. We will suppose G. Britain was not only to agree to the Independency of America but to cede Canada, Nova Scotia, Rhode Island, N. York, and the Floridas—but with this preliminary *Sine qua non*—viz, that the Individuals engaged in either Party shou'd be re-establish'd in their Property on both sides of the Atlantic and in the W. Indies it must be allow'd that a Peace on these terms wou'd be salutary and honorable to America—but such are the measures of our Assembly that it cou'd not take place—They have without distinction of Whigs or Tories Friends or Foes confiscated the property of what are call'd British Subjects that is all Who eventually happen to reside at Present in G. Britain, even altho They have from the beginning been the most declared Friends to America—the Governments of Pennsylvania and the Jerseys were much condemn'd by all Men of sound Judgment or those who are tolerably versed in history or the great political writers, for their hasty acts of confiscation—for as the lands confiscated cou'd not run away, no possible inconvenience cou'd result from waiting the issue of the War, and many embarrassments might be avoided—however these Gentlemen had the grace to confine their confiscations to those who had taken an open and positive part with the Enemy—and never once thought of extending it to the eventful Absentees amongst whom are notoriously many of the staunchest friends to America, besides They have observed a sort of decorum and form in their proceeding. They have issued Proclamations to the Parties concern'd to appear before'em and take their tryals—but the Assembly of Virginia

has without proclamation summons appraisals or even communicating the least hint that eventual absence cou'd be consider'd as a crime confounded in one common ruin and proscription their warmest Friends and Advocates with those who are in arms against 'em—to instance Colonel Fairfax, this Gentleman is of Whig connexions, himself a Whig—was call'd by law suit into England some time before the present contest began. He has never been suspected of harbouring an hostile wish to America. He had never been told that his eventual absence cou'd give the least umbrage, much less reputed criminal, but these it seems (when the prize is rich) are trifling considerations—his ample fortune and noble seat on the Potomac are now confiscated.

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#### MEMORANDUM.

The case in dispute betwixt M<sup>r</sup> Roberts and General Lee is as follows :—M<sup>r</sup> Nourse had powers to make any contracts with Mr. Roberts—the contract He made was that Mr. Roberts was at the expiration of the year to receive two hundred and fifty bushels of wheat and a reasonable allowance for the labour of his Boys—at the expiration of y<sup>e</sup> year M<sup>r</sup> Roberts was paid for his superintendency the full value of two hundred and fifty bushels of wheat at the then current price, for according to the Contract General Lee was at liberty either to pay it in grain specifically or in money which was the current value—a reasonable allowance for the labour of his Boys only remain'd to be settled—General Lee requested M<sup>r</sup> Roberts to send in his books, and that three Gentlemen might be appointed to settle by arbitration the sum that ought to be allow'd for the labour of the Boys—it was a long time before M<sup>r</sup> Roberts cou'd be prevail'd on to send in his books, which whether satisfactory or unsatisfactory occasion'd the delay which M<sup>r</sup> Nourse complains of—M<sup>r</sup> Nourse says that as Gen. Lee's

Agent, He agreed to pay M<sup>r</sup> Roberts two hundred and fifty bushels bushel of wheat or the current value at the expiration of y<sup>e</sup> year for his superintendency, but M<sup>r</sup> Nourse himself confesses that He understood Roberts was to set his hand to the place as well as his Sons—M<sup>r</sup> Roberts has confess'd in the presence of many witnesses that He did not work, and gave for his reason of not working that General Lee had desir'd him not to work—this General Lee denies—indeed it is impossible to conceive He shou'd be guilty of so great a folly—M<sup>r</sup> Roberts has without General Lee's consent or assent of M<sup>r</sup> Nourse, fed his whole family, three or four horses and five cattle at the expense of General Lee, the expence of which from the circumstances of the times is very great—indeed had M<sup>r</sup> Roberts's wife or daughter acted in any degree in the capacity of servants, had the women made butter, cheese, wove or spun for him, or in fact render'd him any services; General Lee wou'd never have thought of bringing any charges against M<sup>r</sup> Roberts for the maintenance of his family, but as it can be prov'd that They never did, and as it can be prov'd M<sup>r</sup> Roberts did not tend properly Gen. Lee's land, Gen. Lee thinks He has a right to be paid for

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FRAGMENT.

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cannot be collected—of the only two practicable measures you have adopted neither, but very wisely have hit on a Third, which is not only absolutely impracticable but ruinous if attempted to be put in practice—ruinous at least to forty nine out of fifty of the landed Gentlemen Farmers and Planters which amounts I think to pretty near the whole aggregate—I am curious to know who was the Father and Promoter of the hard money tax in particular—I have been told indeed

it was a very good friend of mine—whose good qualities as a man as a Father, Husband, Friend and Gentleman, I love and honour—but as a Politician I must confess I cannot help entertaining the highest contempt for him—On this subject I never knew him once to deviate into common sense, and like all men whose opinions are absurd, He is as positive and obstinate in proportion to the absurdity of his opinions as—I have been that He and George Mason have determin'd to throw down the whole fabrick of the English tariff and substitute one of their own framing in its stead—and a blessed code it is likely to be, especially when We consider the pious regard which M<sup>r</sup> Mason paid to the most sacred rights in the affair of the Indiana Company and the disseising the freeholds of the Clergy—but such a presumptuous chimera is too gross for a man of common patience to animadvert upon—for God's sake why is not some method adopted for the administration of justice? why are not competent Judges appointed as in England, for the County Court Justices it is notorious have not knowledge or abilities to qualify 'em for constables, and the Peoples property of course is held by a very whimsical tenure—why is not some attachment paid to the state and encouragement of agriculture on which the strength and wealth of a Country principally depends? for instance, why should not Hogs be confin'd or at least ring'd, for 'till this is done, it is impossible that there shou'd be a single good farm. I ask'd M<sup>r</sup> White why it was not; his answer was, that it was mention'd, but . . . because it was concluded that the People wou'd never submit to it—if this is the case, the People in Virginia must resemble the Giant in Rabelais who used to swallow windmills for his breakfast, and was afterwards chok'd by a little lump of butter before a warm oven.

## MEMORANDUM.

The Capital points into which the People of England have been led with respect to this Country in general and the Bostonians in particular.

1<sup>st</sup> That had it not been for the Bostonians the tea act wou'd have been submitted to.

2. That they began what the others only followed.

3. That their manner of proceeding was more indecent and violent than that of the other Provinces.

4<sup>th</sup> That a few factious Spirits in each Province have governed the People.

5<sup>th</sup> That if these misleaders were taken off the People wou'd submit.

6<sup>th</sup> That Independance has been their view from the beginning particularly of the Eastern People—and that They brought it about.

7<sup>th</sup>. That a revenue might be drawn from America without distressing her.

8<sup>th</sup> That America drew Great Britain into the last war.

9<sup>th</sup> That the Navigation Act has been totally disregarded.

10<sup>th</sup> That the Indians were solicited to take an active part in this War.

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## AN ESSAY ON THE COUP D'ÆIL.

It is the general opinion, that the *coup d'æil* does not depend upon ourselves; that it is a present of Nature; that practice will not give it to us; in a word, that we must bring it into the world with us, without which, the most piercing eyes see nothing, and we must grope about in utter darkness. This is a mistake: we have all the *coup d'æil* in proportion to the degree of under-



standing which it has pleased Providence to give to us. It is derived from both; but what is acquired, refines and perfects the natural, and experience insures it to us. It is manifest from the actions and conduct of Amilcar, that he had it to a great and fine degree; for he possessed all the qualities requisite for it, and in the greatest point of perfection that perhaps ever any general carried them; as may be remarked in the war of Eryce, and that of the rebels of Africa.

Before I enter into the explication of the method that should be pursued to acquire this talent, falsely thought to be a gift of Nature, it is necessary to define it.—The military *coup d'œil*, then, is nothing else than the art of knowing the nature and different situations of the Country where we make and intend to carry the war; the advantages and disadvantages of the camp and posts that we mean to occupy; as likewise those which may be favourable or disadvantageous to the enemy. By the position of our army, and the consequences drawn from it, we may not only form with precision our designs for the present, but judge of those we may afterwards have. It is alone by this knowledge of the country into which we carry the war, that a great Captain can foresee the events of the whole campaign, and, if it may be so expressed, render himself master of them; because, judging from what he himself has done, of what the enemy must necessarily do, forced as they are, by the nature of the places, to regulate their movements to oppose his designs, he conducts them from post to post, from camp to camp, to the very point he has proposed to himself to insure victory. Such, in a few words, is the military *coup d'œil*, without which it is impossible that a General should avoid falling into a number of faults of the greatest consequence. In a word, there are little hopes of victory if we are destitute of what is called the *coup d'œil* of war; and as the military science is of the same nature with all others that require practice to possess them in all the different parts that compose them, this



which I treat of, is, of all others, that which requires the greatest practice.

Philopœmen, one of the greatest Captains that Greece produced, and whom an illustrious Roman has called the last of the Grecians, had the *coup d'œil*, in an admirable degree; but we ought not to consider it as a gift of Nature, but as the fruit of study, application, and his extreme passion for war. Plutarch informs us of the method he used to enable himself to see with his own eyes, rather than those of other people, when he was at the head of armies. The passage deserves to be quoted.

“He willingly listened,” says the Greek author, “to the discourses, and read the treatises of the philosophers; not all, but only those which could aid him in his pursuit of virtue; and of all the great ideas of Homer, he sought for, and retained those alone which could whet his courage, and animate him towards great actions: and of all other lectures, he preferred the treatises of Evangelus, called the Tactics, that is, the art of ranging troops in order of battle; and the histories of the life of Alexander; for he thought that language was of no further use than its reference to action, and that the only end of reading was to learn how to conduct ourselves; unless we chuse to read merely to pass the time, or to furnish ourselves with the means of keeping up idle and fruitless chat.

When he had read the precepts and rules of the tactics, he did not trouble his head about seeing the demonstration of them by plans on paper, but made the application of them in the very scenes of action, and in open field; for, in his marches, he accurately observed the eminences and low places, the breaks and irregularities of the ground, and all the forms and figures which battalions and squadrons are obliged to take in consequence of rivulets, ravines, and defiles, which force them to close or extend themselves. In general, it appears, that Philopœmen had a very strong passion for arms; that he embraced war as a profession that

gave greater play to his virtues ; in a word, he despised all those as idle and useless members of the community, who did not apply themselves to it."

These, in abridgement, are the most excellent precepts that can be given to a prince, the general of an army, and every officer who wishes to arrive at the highest degrees of military rank. This is the only method ; and, as the translator has very judiciously observed, renders the putting the precepts into practice, on occasion, more easy than by studying the plans on paper. Plutarch accuses, and even severely censures Philopœmen for having carried his passion for arms beyond the bounds of moderation. Mons. Dacier does not fail to chime in with him ; but, both the one and the other, without well knowing what they say, have passed an unfair judgment on this great Captain ; as if the science of war was not immense, and did not comprehend all others in its vortex ; and as if, to acquire a perfect knowledge of it, a long and laborious application was not necessary. Plutarch was no soldier ; his translator less so : it escaped both the one and the other, that Philopœmen was as learned as the greatest part of the Grecian generals, and that he applied himself to the study of philosophy and history, so necessary for military men. Why, then, be offended that a man should apply and give himself entirely up to the study of the sciences which have a relation to his profession ? That of arms is not only most noble, but the most extensive and profound ; consequently it demands the greatest application. What this great Captain did to acquire the *coup d'œil*, is extremely necessary and important for the command of armies on which depend the glory and safety of the State.

There is no doubt but that tactics, or the art of ranging armies in the order of battle, of encamping and fighting them, is a most royal attainment. What could be the reason that Hannibal ranked Pyrrhus king of the Epirots, before Scipio, and immediately after Alexander, although the latter was certainly the ablest man ?

It was, doubtless, because the first excelled all mankind in this great part of war, although Scipio did not yield to him in this point, as he made appear at the battle Lama. Hannibal was less practised in this branch than the two others. Philopœmen saw that the study of tactics, and the treatises of Evangelus, were of no use to him, unless he joined to them the *coup d'œil*, so necessary to the general of an army. His method always pleased me, and it is what I have ever practised in my journeys, and in the camp; for we ought not to wait for the opportunity of war to acquire the *coup d'œil*, but it may be learnt and obtained by the exercise of hunting.

To attain this science, many things are necessary. Severe application to our profession is the basis; then a certain method is to be adopted: Although that of this Grecian Captain is good, I think I have improved upon it, or at least discovered that which the Greek author has omitted to teach us more particularly. We are not always at war, nor is it to be supposed that we can render ourselves able by experience alone, on which indeed the capacity of the greater part of military men in these ages is founded: it serves to perfect us, but is scarcely of any use unless the study of the principles accompany it; because, war being a science, it is impossible to make any progress without beginning with the study of the principles. Two ages of perpetual war would scarcely suffice to furnish lights for our conduct: from the experience of facts, this ought to be left to souls of an ordinary stamp, and more compendious methods be provided for great Captains to mount to the summit of glory, without being indebted for it to the capacity of others, which is not always to be met with. It is, then, necessary to study war before we engage in it, and to apply ourselves incessantly after we are engaged in it. I have before said, that we are not always at war; and I may add, that armies are not always drawn together in a body, or in motion. They are for six months at least quiet in winter quar-

ters; and six months are not sufficient to form the *coup d'œil* of war. It is true, that a great deal more is to be learnt in marches, in forages, and in the different camps and posts which armies occupy: the ideas become more clear and capable to judge of, and reflect on, the country we see; but this does not prevent us from making use of it, by the assistance of good sense, on other occasions than when in armies; or from refining our judgment and eye, either by hunting, or on our journeys:—this I can speak of from experience.

Nothing contributes more to form the *coup d'œil*, than the exercise of hunting: for, besides giving us a thorough knowledge of the country, and of the different situations, which are infinite, and never the same, it teaches us a thousand stratagems and other things relative to war. But the principle is the knowledge of the objects that form the *coup d'œil*, without our being sensible of it; and if we practise it with this intention, we may, with the addition of a very few reflections, acquire the greatest and most important qualification of a general of an army.

The great Cyrus, in giving himself entirely up to hunting, in his younger years, had the pleasure of it less in view than the design of qualifying himself for war and the command of armies. Xenophon, who wrote his life, does not leave us in the least doubt on this head. He says, that this great man, on his preparing for war with the king of Armenia, reasoned upon this expedition as if the question had been of a party of hunting in a mountainous country. He explained himself thus to Chrysantes, one of his general officers, whom he had detached into the roughest parts and the most difficult vallies, in order to gain the entrances and issues, and to cut off all retreat to the enemy. “Imagine,” says he, “that it is a chace we are engaged in, and that it is allotted to thee to watch at the toils, whilst I beat the country. Above all, remember not to begin the chace before all the passages are occupied, and that those who are placed in ambuscade be not

seen, lest they should frighten the game. Take care not to engage thyself too far in the woods, from whence thou mightest find it difficult to extricate thyself; and command your guides, unless they could indeed shorten the distances, to conduct you by the best roads, which, with respect to armies, are always the shortest."

Whether or not Xenophon, in his history of Cyrus, has run into romance in order to give us an abridgment of the military science treated historically, is a matter of no great importance, provided that all it contains relative to this science be just and solid. His intention is to convince us that hunting leads us to the knowledge of many things necessary to be known—that it is a becoming amusement, and extremely necessary to those who are either born to command or to obey; because it enures us to bear the fatigues of war, strengthens the constitution, and forms the *coup d'œil*; for an exact knowledge of a certain extent of country, facilitates that of others, if he but sees it in the slightest manner. It is impossible, although they are widely different, that there should not be some conformity betwixt them; and the perfect knowledge of one (says Machiavel in his political discourses) leads to that of another. On the contrary, those who are not trained in this practice, have the greatest difficulty to acquire it; whilst the others, by a single glance of the eye, can ascertain the extent of a plain, the height of a mountain, the depth, breadth, and termination of a valley, and all the circumstances of the nature of the different grounds to which they are accustomed by habit and experience. I do not believe that any other author, than this I have quoted, has treated of this matter. The remainder is excellent: I shall beg leave to transcribe it.

"Nothing is more true," continues he, "than what I here advance, if we may give credit to Titus Livius, and the example he presents to our eyes in the person of Publius Decius, who was Tribune in the Roman army, commanded by the Consul Cornelius, against the Samnites. It happened that this General suffered him-

self to be pushed into a valley, where the enemy might have pent him up. In this extremity, Decius says to the Consul, 'Don't you perceive yonder eminence, which commands the enemy? This is the post that alone can extricate us, if we do not lose a single moment in making ourselves master of it, as the Samnites have been so blind as to abandon it.' But before Decius addressed himself in this manner to the Consul, he had discovered through the wood, a hill which commanded the camp of the enemy; that it was steep, and of pretty difficult access for heavy armed troops, but practicable enough to the light infantry. That the Consul ordered the Tribune to take possession of it with three thousand men that he had consigned to him; which having happily executed, the whole army retreated in order to put themselves in a place of safety. That he ordered some few of his people to follow, whilst there was yet some remains of day-light, in order to discover the passes guarded by the enemy, and those by which a retreat might be made; and he went to reconnoitre, disguised in the habit of a common soldier, that the Samnites might not perceive that it was a general officer who was on the scout."

"If we reflect," continues Machiavel, "upon what Titus Livius here says, we shall see how necessary it is for a good General to be able to judge of the nature of a country; for if Decius had not possessed this talent, he would not have known how advantageous the possession of this hill must have been to the Romans; and he would have been incapable of discovering at a distance, whether it was of easy or difficult access. When, afterwards, he had made himself master of it, and when the point was to rejoin the Consul, he would not have been able, at a distance, to discover which posts were guarded by the enemy, and those by which a retreat was practicable. Decius, therefore, must certainly have been very intelligent in these sort of matters; for otherwise he could not have saved the Roman army by possessing himself of this hill, and afterwards extri-



cated himself from the enemy, who had surrounded him."

There are very few military men who are capable of drawing, from an historical fact, such observations as these I have cited from Machiavel: the most consummate master in the profession could do no more. I am not at all surprised at it; a profound and well-digested study of history necessarily leads us to the knowledge of an infinity of things, which enables us to judge soundly and solidly of all. The study of politics, of which history is the basis, is a powerful means of perfecting our understanding and judgment.

The political and military discourses of this author, on the Decades of Livy, are an immortal work. I think them worthy the curiosity of all military men--of being attentively read and well digested. His life of Castuccioni, one of the greatest Captains of his age, though not very much known, is not less admirable. It is every where ornamented with curious and very instructive facts; and filled with military reflections and observations which few people are capable of making. So happy a turn had this man for the profession of arms, (excepting his book on the art of war, which does not do him a great deal of honour, although it is pillaged from Vegetius,) he is admirable in all. He lived at a time when Italy was so agitated with trouble intestine and foreign wars, that we must not be surprised if a man of sense and judgment, and learned besides, was equal to so noble a performance; because, as he was on the scene of action, he had the means of obtaining the most excellent materials, and of conversing with officers who had served in these wars.

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#### A PICTURE OF THE COUNTESS OF ———.

THE Countess has, what we see seldom united in the same woman, vivacity and tenderness, dignity of person

and feminine softness. She is tall and exquisitely shaped. She is of an amiable and commanding aspect. Her eyes are of the languishing English blue, but of the Grecian largeness and contour. Her forehead is of a polish and formation not to be matched. Her lips are full and ripe, from which issues a breath which would create desires in age and coldness. Her neck is of such a colour and symmetry as to make us curse invidious custom for preventing us gazing on the whole of so admirable a piece of workmanship. Her skin is of a smoothness that the slightest contact of it thrills through every pore, and beats alarm to a thousand wishes. Her person is rather ample; but we could not consent to its diminution, lest some grace or beauty should be lost.

No man has seen her laugh; but she smiles frequently. Her smiles seem rather to be the result of an inclination to make those about her cheerful and happy, than of any inherent gaiety of disposition in herself. She has, at times, a dash of melancholy in her countenance, which is more becoming than her smiles. These short symptoms of melancholy I should attribute to her vacancy of heart, to her want of some one object upon which she may fix her affections; a necessity which Nature has imposed upon Woman for a wise purpose—the perpetuation of the human race.

She has faults; but her faults seem to be acquired—her virtues a native inheritance. She is so general, that it almost amounts to coquetry. She makes too little distinction betwixt the men of merit and sense, and the foolish and undeserving. She can cruelly suffer the sincere respectful lover to languish without a glimmer of hope, and give encouragement to the assured, indifferent coxcomb, who would boast of favours which she is, perhaps, determined to confer on no man. She has the appearance of being so satisfied with these reptiles, that you would suspect her understanding, did not every sentence which she utters correct this mistake. She may be accused in this, of ingratitude towards her



benefactress Nature, who bestowed on her such uncommon talents, not to be hebetated by the galimatias of fools, but, by a proper application of her time, to be perfected into mental endowments proportionable to her personal charms. She acts wisely in being cautious of a second marriage, as the great fortune which she is possessed of, must render it difficult for her to distinguish who courts her riches, who herself. But the man who shall be happy enough to obtain her, will do well to hurry his prize to some retreat from the great world, as the facility which I complain of might create him much uneasiness: for it is an eternal truth, that great love, and some degree of jealousy are inseparable. There thou mightest, O envied mortal! enjoy perpetual happiness; if candour, frankness, good nature, understanding and beauty could make thee happy.

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AN ACCOUNT OF A CONVERSATION, CHIEFLY RELATIVE  
TO THE ARMY.

SOME time ago, I made one of a company of officers, whose conversation was not confined, as is too much the custom of gentlemen of our profession, to *buckles, buttons, garters, grenadier caps*, or, what is little better, the *figure that such or such a regiment made in their puerile reviews for the amusement of royal masters and misses, great and small, in Hyde Park, or on Wimbledon Common*; our discourse fell upon the history of England, and the respective merits of the different historians.

A young subaltern, who seemed to have great fire and sentiment, and with more reading than young subalterns are generally masters of, was extremely bitter on Mr. Hume: he loaded him with a thousand opprobriums; he styled him a sophist, a jesuit, a theistical champion of despotism, who had dethroned the God of Heaven, and deified the sceptered monsters of the earth. The young man was taken up by a grey-headed field-

officer, who was so warm a partizan of Mr. Hume's, that he leaned not only towards absolute (or in his favourite author's terms) pure unmixed monarchy, but visibly towards jacobitism. He spoke of Charles the First with an idolatrous reverence, and of all his opponents with the greatest horror and indignation: this led him to a great deal of abuse on Mrs. M'Cawley, he lamented that a composition of this nature was suffered to be published, which must instil the most damnable republican principles into the minds of our youth; that it already had diminished that respect to royalty so necessary to be kept up; and that the young gentleman who spoke last had furnished us with an instance, that the army had not escaped the contagion—a most alarming consideration! as their disrespect to crowned heads was not manifested alone by opinions injurious to the royal martyr, but that several of them had frequently in their conversations declared their disapprobation of some parts of the present reign; that such sentiments, and such language, were not only repugnant to the spirit of our military laws, but indecent and ungrateful in those who *eat his Majesty's bread*. This he uttered with so much emphasis, that the greatest part of the company was terrified into silence; and the young subaltern began to think he had been guilty in some measure of treason, and I believe would have prevaricated himself into other sentiments than those he had professed, had I not taken up his cause, justified all he had advanced, and encouraged him to foster the noble principles he had imbibed. I demanded of our veteran to explain his meaning in saying that *we eat his Majesty's bread*; whence had his Majesty drawn funds to feed so many mouths? Were coffers of gold transported from his personal estates in Germany? or, had he discovered in his gardens at Kew, treasures sufficient for such prodigious munificence? Were the officers of the army forlorn and starving in the streets, without patrimony, relations and friends; cut off by their country, from all means of supporting themselves; in a word, precluded from

all the possibilities, presented to other members of society, or procuring a livelihood? Had his Majesty found the whole body of us in this wretched desperate situation, and out of the vast benevolence of his soul, and at his own individual expence, without the least incumbrance to the nation, redeemed us from hunger and nakedness, fed us comfortably, clothed us in smart red coats, put swords by our sides, and erected us into the condition of gentlemen? I said, if these things could be proved, but on no other terms, I would agree with the gentleman who spoke last, that *we really did eat the king's bread*, and that we were perhaps in duty bound to approve all his measures, and all those of his ministers, whether right or wrong, glorious or inglorious, salutary or pernicious.—But, on the other hand, if we considered ourselves, as we really were, only as a class of one great free people, segregated from the rest into this distinct class, and subjected to particular laws necessary for the maintenance of military order and discipline, without which we could not answer the ends of our institution, that is, *the immediate defence of our mother country against foreign invaders, and the preservation of our colonies and external possessions, the great basis and support of our commerce, wealth and marine, consequently our national importance and independence*: I said the King might be considered, partly in the same predicament with the officers of the army, or the fleet, viz. *a great servant of the community, or mass of the people, ordained and subsisted for the public service*; with this difference, that each individual of the army, or fleet, contributed as a citizen, and one of the people, to his subsistence, as a soldier, or servant of the great aggregate, of which he himself, in another sense, formed a part; whereas the king was simply a receiver; in no respect a contributor; so that it might in fact be said with more propriety, that the king eat the officer of the army's bread, than that the officers of the army eat the king's. I confessed that his Majesty, as one branch of the legislature, and executive

magistrate, was entitled to a very high degree of reverence from soldiers as well as other citizens, as long as he fulfilled the duties of his station; but that still a higher degree of reverence and attachment was due to the freedom, laws, prosperity and glory of our country, than personally to the first magistrate, let him fill his office ever so worthily. When it was remembered, I added, that the present reigning family had been taken from a German electorate, not the most considerable, exalted to the head of a mighty empire, endowed with adequate revenues, and invested with the godlike powers of executing justice, but softening its rigours, of dealing out mercy, but restrained from evil; I said, when these things were remembered, should his present Majesty, or any of his successors, pervert the power granted by the generosity and confidence of the people, to the prejudice or dishonour of the people, the officers of the army, no more than any other class of citizens, could not be taxed with ingratitude, or indecency, in censuring their prince, but the prince in furnishing matter of censure.—The old field officer began to soften: he confessed that his expression with respect to the officer's eating his Majesty's bread was improper; but still insisted, that the army ought to be more reserved in their censure than any other order of men, as they seemed to be held in higher esteem by the present Court than any other order. In this again I totally differed from the old gentleman. I asserted it was the reverse; that the army had been treated through the whole present reign, both individually, and collectively, with more contempt and ingratitude than in any reign of any age or any country; that the ill usage of the army had not been confined to the living, it had extended to the dead. To begin with Mr. Wolfe, to whose valour and conduct we owed the acquisition of a mighty empire, how irreverently had his ashes been treated by government! The nation had indeed gratefully and generously voted a monument to their hero; the nation had paid the money, but unfortunately his Majesty's ministers were the

trustees; to this day therefore we see no monument erected; the money raised on the people for this purpose, having probably been converted to the use of some living worthies, not very far distant from Westminster Abbey. But they were not satisfied with depriving the hero of these trophies; they had piqued themselves in adding every insult to his memory. The man who had served, or rather disserved, under him; who had shewn activity only in embarrassing his counsels, impeding his measures, and labouring to defeat his purposes; who had strained his hardbound wit to throw a ridicule on his conduct; who, whenever he could find an audience passive and base enough to his mind had poured forth torrents of abuse, and endeavoured to raise a spirit of faction and mutiny in others, equal to that stirred up in his own breast, by the daemon of envy; who after his glorious death, had not paid the slightest tribute of respect to his memory, or of ceremony to his remains; who had attempted to filch *his laurels off the shelf, and put them in his pocket*: This man, I said, had been loaded with the highest preferments, and the greatest honours, (if any thing which flows from such a court can be deemed honours,) which our court has to bestow.—Let us next observe how the brave band, who conquered under him, and indeed the whole American army, had been recompensed, *officers and soldiers*. The first instance of gratitude exhibited by our government, was the depriving them of their provision, without which it is almost impossible that an American soldier should subsist: the vast consumption of necessaries occasioned by the nature of that hard service, from clearing communications, building bridges and forts, but above all from transporting provisions, ammunition and artillery up the rivers, and the enhanced price of these necessaries, as they all come from England, by the freight and profit of the merchants, put an American soldier, although allowed provision, in a worse condition than an European without it; particularly when we consider, that an European soldier is

paid for all king's or public works, which in America was not the case. But the cruelty of this measure was not all: it was flagitious; it was a breach of compact, at least with respect to a great part of that army—the volunteer drafts from England, the whole body of royal Americans, and every man recruited in America, were engaged on absolute express conditions of being allowed provision. Travelling from North America to the West Indies, the tenderness of the present reign displayed towards the soldiery is still more striking; the distribution of the plunder of the Havanna is so notorious that it would be impertinent to mention it; but the motives of this distribution are so curious, that it is not difficult frequently to recur to them. They were these: The Earl of Bute and his great adjunct lived in perpetual apprehensions of the late Duke of Cumberland; the firmness of the man, his known courage, his good sense, but above all his principles and attachment to the welfare and honour of his country, rendered him an object of terror to those who were determined to sacrifice every thing to the maintenance of their own power and authority—after having revolved in their minds what was the most probable method of softening this bar to their schemes into some complacency, it was concluded, that to win his favourite, was the plan of the most promising aspect.

The expedition against the Havanna was at this time resolved upon; the troops and fleet were in readiness; my lord of Albemarle was on this principle appointed to the command, and on this principle so enormously enriched at the expence of the labour, health, and blood of the most noble deserving army that this, or perhaps any other country, has been ever served by. His lordship and his family were indeed aggrandized; but the great views of the distributors were happily disappointed. The Duke of Cumberland persisted in his integrity, and continued an honest zealous citizen, until the fatal moment when he was snatched away from his country. I think, without rant or exaggeration, it may



be termed a fatal moment:—he was indisputably a valuable true Englishman: he had in the early parts of his life, through an over zeal for reforming the army from the miserable condition in which he found them, projected schemes not unexceptionable; but this must be ascribed to a deference which he paid to the opinion of men infinitely inferior to himself, both in virtue and talents; but in his latter years, his great and good qualities demonstrated themselves so fully, that we may fairly conclude, had fate spared him, he might at least have checked the torrent of those bitter waters broke in upon us from their accursed source of Carleton-House.—But before I take leave of America, I cannot help observing the extraordinary attention paid to the officers and soldiers in the allotment of lands; it would be endless to enter into the detail of the royal or ministerial (for these terms have been of late so confounded together that it is puzzling to distinguish them) bounty in this particular; I shall instance one or two which may suffice for the whole.

It had long been supposed that the island of St. John's, in the gulph of St. Lawrence, would have been a profitable possession. A set of officers of the land and sea service, laid out a plan for the settlement of it. They presented it to Government, and petitioned a grant of it. The grant was promised. The officers dangled from day to day for the fulfilling of this promise. They were shuffled from the Admiralty to the Board of Trade, from the Board of Trade to the Admiralty, from an Egmont to an Hilsborough, from an Hilsborough to an Egmont, for the space, I believe of three years. Egmont accuses Hilsborough as the cause of this delay; Hilsborough accuses Egmont; his Majesty stands neuter betwixt these two righteous personages.

The officers danced attendance until they found themselves on the threshold of a jail; but at length it is decided: The officers who were the original petitioners, got half a lot. Mr. Touchit, or Touchat, (for I have

not the honour of knowing how he spells his name,) some court surgeons, and every kind of court retainer who thinks it worth his while to hint that he has no objection to an American possession, is gratified with a whole lot.

Another society of officers had solicited a grant of lands on the river St. Lawrence, which they undertook to settle; this was flatly refused.

Another society solicited for lands on the lower part of the Illinois, Ohio, or on the Mississippi: this was likewise rejected; but from what motives it is impossible to define, unless they suppose that soldiers invested with a little landed property, would not be so readily induced to act as the instruments of the oppression of their fellow subjects, as those whose views are solely turned, if not reduced, to farther promotion; and if reduced, to full pay. And here I am afraid the understandings of our profession must appear dreadfully low, when they can be dupes to the hopes of promotion.

Let them reflect for a moment on the mode of bestowing, since the peace, the only commission which by military men can be esteemed objects; I mean regiments, and lieutenant-colonelcies; and I will venture to affirm, that not four of each have been bestowed on men who, in the opinion of those who have served with them, have the semblance of a title. That the army on the English and on the Irish establishment, and the fleet on the home and foreign stations, have been considered by our court as the precious means of corrupting us from our duty as citizens; that a plea of merit in general, or any particular action, of wounds, loss of health or limbs by a course of hard service, has been considered as a symptom of lunacy. And I have heard say, our incomparable Secretary at War values himself not a little for his humanity in not suing for statutes to confine the wretches who can push their extravagance to such a height as to make these pleas. It will perhaps be said, that jobs are not the growth of this reign;



that jobs ever were, and ever will be, in a government like ours. But allowing jobs to have been, I cannot think iniquity is to be justified by precedent; and surely iniquitous precedents are very ungracefully quoted in a reign which was announced from its commencement to be that of virtue, purity, and righteousness.

As to the army that served in Germany, it is true they have not been so very grossly treated as the American. There were moments when Lord Granby would not cede to our gracious Secretary at War. There were moments when, as our ingenious court termed it, he was obstinate and impracticable; that is, there were moments when he insisted on some regard being paid to those who had deserved of their country; but these moments unfortunately occurred but too seldom. His facility and complacence to the wickedness of the Court, preponderated over his natural love of justice. In short, the patronage of the army was left to a Barrington, by whom valour, sense and integrity must naturally be proscribed, as he must suspect that no man can possess them without being an enemy to their contraries, which are the undisputed attributes of his Lordship.

From this long digression on the obligations of the army to the present Court, on the extraordinary esteem in which the military has been held through the whole course of the present reign, we returned to our original topic, the merit of the different historians.

I joined the young subaltern in his encomiums on Mrs. Macaulay. I challenged the old field-officer to point out a suspicious authority that she had quoted; to produce a single comment which did not correspond with the facts. I asserted, that her inferences were fairly drawn from her premises; and that there could not be traced the shadow of partiality in the long series of her history, unless a zeal for true liberty, and the rights of her country and of mankind, may be termed partiality. I asserted, that Hume was the re-

verse in all respects; that he produced little, and that very suspicious, authority; that his comments did not agree with his facts, the effects not deducible from the causes; upon the whole, what I said on the subject of James's history, and of the character of his favorite Charles, was so satisfactory to the company, that they requested me to digest what I offered, and to present it to the public.

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### A POLITICAL ESSAY.

ON leaving school, I thought it right to get some acquaintance with the history of England; for the school where I was brought up was guilty, in common with all other schools, of the shameful neglect of suffering the boys to remain in utter ignorance of the laws, constitution and transactions of their own country; some knowledge of which is certainly of more importance, at least in a government like ours, than the being able to scan the flattering versificos of Augustus's age.

Rapin, accidentally was the first historian that fell into my hands. Notwithstanding his length, I read him through with great attention, which was more particularly engaged when I came to those parts which treat of our several civil wars; but the great one of the year 1640, interested me more sensibly than the antecedent. And I cannot express how much I was amazed in finding the character of Charles the First so little agree with the notions I had conceived of him, from his being styled a martyr; from the solemn observance of the 30th of January, in order to avert the wrath of the Almighty for that horrible parricide; from the epithets of good, virtuous, pious, blessed, which were perpetually bestowed on him, not only by the old house-keeper, the maid-servants, but by the master, usher, and all the clergy who happened to discourse on this subject in my hearing. In the holidays, when we went home, my

mother, grandmother, and all their female acquaintance, rung the same in my ears.

On the perusal of Rapin I was, therefore, strangely puzzled and confounded to find this virtuous, pious, blessed, holy martyr, metamorphosed into an obstinate, dissembling, perfidious tyrant; and that the men whom I had been taught to execrate as rebels, traitors, parricides, should, for the greater part, appear the champions of the laws of their country and the rights of mankind, fraught with truth, valor, integrity, and every attribute which can render mortal men the objects of veneration.

I had no method of accounting for this, but by concluding my historian guilty of the most egregious partiality, that he must have misstated, or disguised the facts to an enormous degree; for as to his comments, they appeared judicious, natural, and fair, allowing the facts to be justly stated. I desired all those whom I thought more knowing and wise than myself, to solve these difficulties. Some few of them averred that Charles was not at all better than what he was represented by Rapin; but far the greater number assured me, that Rapin was a lying French Presbyterian, partial, unjust, malicious, that no credit was given to him by men of judgment and knowledge, and that he was never spoke of with common patience by those who have any generous sentiments. They advised me, by all means, to go to the fountain head of information on this subject, the *great Clarendon*; that *there* I should see the facts related clearly and honestly, the comments sensible and candid, the causes and effects congruous, the spring of every action laid open, the views and characters of the actors painted in their proper colors by one who had himself played a principal part, or, at least, seen everything that had passed behind the scenes; one, whose authority was incontestable from his character for truth and integrity.

I accordingly procured a Clarendon, not only read him with attention, but studied him with accuracy: and,

behold the result! it was an entire, complete disappointment in every circumstance; instead of carrying the conviction which I expected, it appeared to me one eternal periphrasis, subdivided into assertions without authority, childish ifs, without probable suppositions, and tortured inferences from misstated or defalcated facts, with endless begging the questions. The epithets candid, sincere, virtuous, pious were very liberally bestowed on him, whose cause he intends to plead; and not a single instance of candor, sincerity, or virtue is given through the whole course of his history, unless excessive bigotry to episcopacy and a spirit of persecuting all other protestant sects is to be construed piety. In short, my aversion to Charles was rather confirmed than transferred to the other party by the perusal of Lord Clarendon. I here discerned very plainly, why the episcopal clergy should have made a Saint and a martyr of him. His excessive attachment to their order, and the great sacrifices he made to them, are undoubtedly very substantial titles to canonization, and the crown of martyrdom; but the zeal and reverence with which a multitude of others who are quite indifferent to modes of worship, and some who seem desirous there should be none at all, still continue to speak of this prince, and the indignation and horror with which they speak of his opponents, I confess is with me a matter of wonder. I know very well, that the impressions we receive in our childhood sink deep, and that these impressions, whether we receive them from our nurses, grandmother, or the parson of the parish; whether they concern ghosts, or hobgoblins, a devil, or a saint, a tyrant, or a martyr, are with difficulty effaced; but that those who have got rid of those narrow superstitious prejudices, should still retain, in their utmost force, their prepossessions with respect to their royal master is something supernatural. I have long endeavoured to account for this, and am apt to conclude, that it must be ascribed to the singularity of his fate. A king tried and condemned by his own subjects

is certainly a singular case, the singularity of his fate has created pity, and pity ever generates love and affection. The Marquis of Beccaria, in his incomparable treatise on Crimes and Punishments, is of opinion, that a community ought to punish with death such criminals only whose existence is absolutely pernicious to the community; if his reasoning is just, a criminal king is almost the only criminal on whom death ought to be inflicted, as his existence, (if not always absolutely destructive,) is undoubtedly highly dangerous to society. Tarquin was only expelled; Tarquin's existence was nearly destructive to Rome; an eternal war and conspiracies within the walls which brought Rome into the extremest peril, were the consequences of the tyrant's existence; and the death of the tyrant *simply* unless it had been accompanied with that of his sons, would not have injured the tranquillity and security of Rome.

On this principle, some of the Grecian States had laws levelled, not only against the lives of those who should erect themselves into the tyrants of their country, but enjoining the extirpation of their whole race; and these were wise and humane laws, because they were necessary for the good of the whole, for the sacrifice of a single family for the preservation of millions is indisputably humanity. James the Second was expelled like Tarquin, but he and his sons were suffered to escape with their lives; the consequences of their being suffered to escape were three rebellions, which not only threatened immediate destruction to these nations, but endangered the liberties of Europe. It is true, these rebellions were defeated in their immediate purposes, but the existence of the Stuart race hath laid, too certainly, I am afraid, the seeds of our destruction. Their existence has furnished the ministers of the family, which was called in for our preservation, with pretexts for arming the family of *our preservers*, with the means of destroying us; for it is impossible to suppose that the nation could have been brought to acquiesce in

mortgaging the national property, without any visible national purposes, unless they had imagined that national debts were a security against the return of the *dreaded Stuarts*; and it is impossible to suppose that the people could have been so far imposed upon, as to suffer their representatives to vote themselves septennial from triennial, unless they had been persuaded that a septennial parliament formed a stronger barrier against the return of the Stuarts than a triennial; and it is still a greater absurdity to suppose, that a majority of landed gentlemen, of really well meaning honest Englishmen, could be infatuated, to so great a degree, as to sit down contentedly under the establishment of a standing army, the gradual augmentation of it to an enormous bulk, the interweaving of it (as may be said) into our constitution, had not the spectre of the Stuarts return continually danced before their eyes. Hence, I think, without straining, it may be inferred, that the pecuniary influence of the crown, septennial parliaments and a standing army, (which unless some great national calamity falls out to draw us back to our first principles, before the minds of our soldiery are totally debauched,) must inevitably end in the destruction of our liberties; and perhaps national independence, have been the fruits of our mistaken cruel moderation, in suffering a single individual of the expelled family to remain in existence. But to return from this long digression to the question, whether the singularity of Charles the First's fate, tried and condemned by his own subjects is not one of the principal causes of his memory's being treated with such tenderness and reverence. We will suppose a case: but first admitting Beccaria's position to be just, *that a community ought not to punish with death any criminal whose existence is not absolutely pernicious, or highly dangerous to the community*; and further admitting *that a criminal king is the only criminal whose existence can be pernicious or highly dangerous*. We will suppose, then, that there should hereafter be formed a community, one of whose fundament-



al laws should be, that capital punishments should be confined to delinquent kings alone ; that all other delinquents, let their crimes be what they will, should be sent into exile ; their estates, money and goods confiscated to the use of the community. I will venture to affirm, that an hundred kings, less guilty than Charles the First, put to death on the scaffold, would not shock the humanity of the tenderest nature.

We will farther suppose, that after a series of years adherence to this law, they should at length, from a concurrence of accidents, on some very great emergency, deviate from it, and inflict the punishment levelled against royal delinquents alone, on delinquents of an inferior order, I will venture to affirm that the spectacle, from its novelty, of a Jonathan Wild, a S——h, or a \* \* \*, dangling on a gallows, would affect the passers-by with compassion, and prompt their ingenuity to devise apologies for the *poor sufferers* ; though, previously to their execution, the whole world had agreed on the transcendancy of their flagitiousness, the incorrigibility of their natures, and that no fate could be too severe for their merits. But, although the singularity of Charles's destiny, the prejudices fostered by the pious care of our nurses and the clergy, have greatly contributed to the false light in which his conduct, morals, and general character are seen, it could not have operated so wonderfully alone : the address and sophistry of a succession of our corrupt citizens have been set at work, to co-operate in misleading our judgment and blinding our understandings ; and of this tribe the pre-eminence must indisputably be given to Mr. David Hume ; for the pompous anility (as I think it may be termed) of Clarendon, the more than priestly fury of Carte, much less the pert patchwork of Smollet, or the drivelling of poor Goldsmith could not have wrought any mighty miracles : but with Hume, the case is different ; the philosophical, or rather sceptical character of the man, antecedent to his appearance as an historian, and a speciousness of style render him so infinitely more

dangerous than his fellow labourers, that it is much to be lamented that some person, (for instance, a Lord Littleton,) eminent for parts and learning, has not thought it worth his while professedly, (but I would have it compendiously, for a reason I shall hereafter give,) to expose to public view the incongruities, artifices, and pernicious intention of this sophist. But when I lament that no man of a superior stamp has set himself the task, I do not mean that extraordinary learning or talents are absolutely necessary: on the contrary, I think an attentive perusal must qualify every man of common sense full as well for the purpose, if we could suppose that an equal degree of regard would be paid to him; but it is certain, that the name and signature of a person in high repute gives to manifest eternal truths, greater force than when uttered by a common or unknown writer, although the essence of truth cannot be altered by the greater or lesser reputation of him who utters it.

It is true, a more effectual antidote to the poison of Hume's history cannot be desired than Mrs. M'Cauley's, if they are but read and compared together with their respective authorities; but the misfortune is, the perusal and comparing of two so bulky writers cannot be expected from the laziness of modern readers; and it is on the notions and principles of the lazy class of readers that the present welfare of our country and the fate of posterity, in a great measure, depend. In fact, of what importance would it be to the community, if those very few, who have inclination and perseverance to work through volumes, should enlarge their minds to even the standard of an ancient Roman, when the young nobility, gentry and men of property, who compose the lazy class, still remain perverted, uncorrected, and uninformed?

For these reasons, I think that some work so compendious as not to terrify by its bulk, confined simply, and bearing the import of such in its title, to a refutation of Hume's tenets, and demonstration of his partial-



ity and pernicious principles, would be more beneficial than a full complete body of history, digested methodically, supported by the best authority, and animated by the noblest sentiments. But until some eminent person will be persuaded to take up the employment, it is the duty of every common citizen to exert whatever force he has in the common cause.

A jealous spirit in the people, of those who govern and the principle of resistance, form the palladium of liberty, particularly in a limited monarchy. An abhorrence of tyrants, or even of those who have a semblance of tyrants, (and it will scarcely be disputed that Charles had a semblance,) is inseparable from this jealous spirit and principle of resistance; whoever would extinguish the one, would extinguish the other. When we see, therefore, a junto of notorious court-retainers, clubbing their labours to reconcile us to the despotic administration of Charles, to his duplicity, to his breach of faith, and violation of the most solemn compacts, we may safely conclude, that a design is lodged to extinguish the *necessary jealous spirit of liberty* and inculcate the principles of non-resistance. It may be said, that a too great jealousy of liberty is equally dangerous with a too great confidence; that as the latter may plunge us into slavery, the former may into anarchy. I should allow some weight to this objection, if, in the whole course of our history, a refutation, in a single instance, could be produced of these positions; *that the spirit of liberty is slow to act, even against the worse princes, and exerts itself in favour of the best with more effect than any other spirit whatever*. I must therefore repeat, that the keeping alive the jealous spirit of liberty is a common cause; that a detestation of tyrants, or even of those who lean to tyranny, is inseparable from this spirit; that Charles the First was a tyrant in principle and in action; that those who labour to reconcile us to his conduct and character, would destroy the spirit of liberty, and ultimately establish the principle of non-resistance; that a junto of mercenaries and court-re-

tainers do labour to these purposes. That it is, therefore, the duty of every common citizen, who has the interest of his country at heart, to exert continually whatever force he has to defeat their purposes; or, at least, weaken their influence; for, in mechanics, the smallest force continually applied will overcome the most violent motions communicated to bodies.

From these considerations, I propose to offer to the public, hereafter, some cursory remarks on Mr. Hume's History of the two first Stuarts: if they are well received, I shall continue them through the reigns of the two last. If they have, in any degree, the effects which I could wish, I shall think myself amply recompensed, the only recompence which I can promise myself. I cannot hope for any glory from the composition; the little reading which a soldier can snatch up at intervals will scarcely qualify him to reap laurels in the field of literature; and it will easily be believed, that the sentiments which I avow, will not procure a place or a pension.

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#### A BREAKFAST FOR RIVINGTON.

MR. H——,

As Mr. Rivington has given the public to understand, that he does not chuse to deal with any writers, but those of the most accurate and elegant kind, and who have passed through a regular course of education; and as I cannot flatter myself, that I am one of this class, I do not presume to offer this little performance to him, though it is intended for his vindication; but as I understand from the same authority, that you admit into your paper even the lowest trash, I find myself under the necessity of applying to you. Mr. Rivington has, I know, like other great men, his calumniators and enemies;—envy and malice ever were attendant on exalted genius and merit. It is inconceivable, what numbers are endeavoring to detract from this wonder-

ful personage ; how they strain their little wits to throw a ridicule upon his talents, his style, his integrity, and even his erudition. This *last*, one should imagine if any thing of human attainment can, is unquestionable, as he has given such eminent and manifold proofs of it : however it does not escape them. I found myself the other night, (for as a studier of men and characters I associate with all sorts,) amongst a set of the most flaming factious enemies to all order and government ; where the most respectable characters of the age were treated with scandalous freedom. Lord Mansfield was a Jefferies, Lord Bute a solemn empty pedantic Jacobite, and Mr. Rivington a ridiculous pragmatical slip-slop coxcomb ; they said, that he had not decency enough for the porter of a bawdy-house, learning enough for a barrack washer-woman, nor imagination sufficient for a christmas-bellman :—that at the age of fifteen he was turned out of the blue-school, where he had been bred, as too incorrigible a dunce to make a scavenger of ; that they had, by way of jocular experiment, for some time tried him in this capacity ; but that he always, in windy days, swept the dust up against the wind. By persisting in this practice he was very near losing his eyes, and that you may observe they are still extremely weak from its effects. At this, Sir, I own my blood boiled. I said, they must be driven to great straits indeed, if they could object nothing worse to a gentleman's character than his having been bred at a charity school ; for that it had been the case of some of the most illustrious men the nation had produced ; the late Lord Hardwicke, and Mr. Prior, had been educated in the same manner. As to the story of the weakness of his eyes, proceeding from sweeping the dust against the wind, I knew it to be a falsehood ; for that it had been contracted, to my knowledge, by poring into a Johnson's dictionary of his own printing, late at nights, to find out decent pollysyllables, of sufficient sound and dignity, to dress up an advertisement of Scotch herrings, lumber and pickled oysters.

I asserted, that his compositions were incomprehensibly fine, his language sonorous and musical ; although, perhaps, he did not always apply words to their legitimate meaning ; as who does in such an immensity of business ; and that he should round a period with any bookseller in Christendom : That he was a Latin scholar, I thought must be allowed by all unprejudiced men, when they considered his numberless and apt quotations from Horace. Upon my mentioning his knowledge of Latin the whole company burst out into a horse-laugh, which I thought was very indecent, and when the uproar subsided, demanded the explanation. They insisted upon it, that he was so totally ignorant of it, that he did not know the meaning, nor could he conjugate the verbs *mentior*, nor *vapulo*, though he so generally practised the former and had so often experienced the latter :—that his patches of Horace were always furnished by his friend the Doctor—that when he had finished one of his pieces, he always applied to the Doctor for a motto to dignify his performance ; that, for instance, the four lines from Horace, prefixed to his late Epistle to Mr. Sears, (which I really think one of the smartest things I ever read,) were pointed out by the Doctor ; and that a blunder whimsical enough had happened on this occasion, though it was fortunately rectified in time for the press. They related, that when he went as usual for his motto to the Doctor, the Doctor wrote him down these lines :

While you alone sustain the weighty cares  
Of all the world, and manage peace and wars ;  
The Roman State by virtue's rules amend,  
Adorn with manners, and with arms defend ;  
To write a long discourse, and waste your time,  
Against the public good, wou'd be a crime.

saying “ Rivington, you may transcribe the Latin at your leisure, as you have Horace in your shop ; remember, it is the first epistle.” Rivington went home vastly happy, but unluckily mistook the first satire for the

first epistle. When the Doctor went to revise it the next morning, he found these lines very fairly written—*Qui fit Mæcenæ ut nemo quam*, &c. and under, the above translation. They added, that though the Doctor was that morning in an horrible ill humour, (as he had just been reading the Bishop of St. Asaph's speech,) he could not refrain from laughing; but, however, after having bestowed some anathemas on the skull of his friend, he, for the honour of the common cause, took the pains to transcribe the lines with his own hand, to prevent any further blunders. They then proceeded to fall foul upon his English; they said that when he first set up his press, and before he was under the correction of the Doctor, he used always to write musketeers, musk-cat-ears—dragoons, dragons—battalions, battle lions; and that he really thought these strange things were made use of in war; that all the words ending in *tion*, as *flagellation*, *castigation*, *salivation*, words he is best acquainted with, he spelt with an *sh*. I hate the story they told of him, which, although I was cursedly enraged, I confess made me smile; that writing to his niece, who was going to be married to an eminent pawnbroker in St. Martin's Lane, he began his letter thus: "My dear Kitty, as you are going to be married, and are so very young a girl, I would advise you, by all means, at least, at first, to act with a little *cushion*," meaning it for *caution*. Now I would appeal to all mankind, who are not totally blinded by party and faction, whether it is credible, whether it is possible, that a gentleman, who has, from his cradle, been in some sort a retainer of the Muses, should be guilty of such gross, such ridiculous blunders. When I say Mr. Rivington has been a retainer of the Muses, I do not mean, Sir, in your paltry sphere, a meer dealer in indexes and title pages. No, Sir, his sphere has been more enlarged. It is notorious, that when he had finished his studies, he was invited into a society of eminent itinerary comedians; I know very well, that his enemies give out, that he only amputated the lumina-

ries betwixt the acts; but I could bring authentic proofs of his distinguishing himself in some important characters.

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ON A FAMOUS TRIAL IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS,  
BETWEEN GENERAL MOSTYN, GOVERNOR OF MINOR-  
CA, AND AN INHABITANT OF THAT ISLAND.

It is a maxim with the Emperors of China, when the people of any of their provinces offer up complaints of their governors, immediately to recall them, to hear the charges brought against them, and, if they are found guilty, to punish them in proportion to their delinquency; and such is the parental complacency of those eastern monarchs for their subjects, that even when the grievances complained of prove ill-founded, the governor who has had the misfortune, though innocently, to incur the ill opinion of the people, is never more employed, in the same capacity, over that or any other province, his having been *suspected* of mal-administration being deemed a total disqualification. Though the justice of this maxim may not be universally admitted, it certainly is a wise one, as it is founded on a respect and deference of the public wishes; to which, when it can be done compatibly with the public safety, the prince ought to pay the greatest regard. But, how different has been the rule of conduct observed through the whole present reign! Does a governor render himself completely odious to the people over whom he is set to preside?—he is that instant adopted a favourite at court. The infamous Bernard, who was not only arraigned, but stands convicted, in the opinion of all mankind, of one continual series of misrepresentation, falsehoods, treachery, and every species of treason to the people of his government, was continued until the last possible moment; and, when recalled, so far from meeting with the censures he had merited, that he was exalted to the rank of a baronet, and had an ample



provision made for him in Ireland. And this public reward for delinquency has had the effect which must naturally be expected; for his successor in office, it is reported, pitches many bars beyond him in perfidy and wickedness, for which he probably expects an Irish peerage. And, to say the truth, if our court acts consistently with itself, they are obliged as his merits are still greater, to confer on him a higher title, and a more ample provision than on the baronet his predecessor.

If we turn our eyes towards Ireland, the decency and kindness exhibited by the court for that people is still more striking. The late viceroy, by talents peculiar to himself, almost on his first landing, incurred the contempt and detestation of the whole kingdom, to a man. This was a sufficient, and, apparently, the only motive of his being continued for a long five years in his station; for, what other motives can be conjectured? As it is agreed, on all hands, that even the wretched expedients from day to day, little jobs and larcenies, as well as the more substantial plundering, called, in the cant of courtiers, business of government, were never so miserably bungled through as by this ridiculous mock-majesty. At length, however, a successor is appointed: at length, under the protection of the whole military, he is withdrawn from the just resentment of the people whom he had oppressed, beggared, and insulted; at length, thus circumstanced, he is presented to his sovereign, by whom he is caressed, smiled upon, and preferred in so distinguished a manner, that a stranger who had been present, would have been apt to imagine him returned loaded with the spoils of some ancient inveterate enemy of his country, and not with the injuries and execration of a whole nation of loyal and affectionate subjects.

Such has been the mode of treating the grievances of our natural brethren of Ireland and the Massachusett's bay, and a still more comfortable prospect is opened to our fellow subjects who are not of British extraction.

The Canadians, the inhabitants of the ceded islands, and of Minorca; these people are told, that if their property is invaded, or their persons insulted, they are to seek redress from the King and Council. Are some late occurrences calculated to give them confidence in those from whom they are to seek redress? Let us, without exaggeration or perversion, state the case of General Mostyn and Mr. Fabrigas. General Mostyn is accused by Fabrigas of violently and illegally throwing him into prison, and afterwards banishing him the island, for no other crime than petitioning against a regulation which he conceived to be prejudicial and grievous. The cause is tried: the allegation not only proves just in its full extent, but aggravated with a variety of wanton, cruel circumstances.—Fabrigas, a substantial farmer, is thrown into the dungeon appropriated to felons convicted of capital crimes; the sentinels receive strict orders not to allow the least refreshment to be conveyed to him; even the air-hole is guarded, lest some of his children or friends should drop a loaf of bread, or bunch of grapes.

Having lain in this miserable dungeon for some days, he is at length hand-cuffed and pinioned, drawn forth, and, by the simple fiat of this smart, lively minature of God's vicegerent on earth, John Mostyn, Esq., hurried on board a ship \* prepared for the purpose, and interdicted from the fire and water of his native island, until it should please the said little, mighty John Mostyn, Esq. to suspend the interdict. And it was thought a wonderful act of clemency, not only by his visier, the most accurate, judicious, liberal, veracious Mr. Wright †, but by another illustrious member of the divan, in thus committing the bow-string or hatchet

\* He was banished for a year to Carthagená. His wife, as they were carrying him on board, appeared on the beach with a matrass, but the guard was ordered to drive her away with their bayonets; this convenience of a matrass being thought too great an indulgence.

† His secretary. This gentleman was asked in court, whether it was a part of the governor's privilege to behead or hang? and replied, ingeniously, he beleived it was. The chief engineer, esteemed a man of some sense and learning, seemed to be of the same opinion.



into the gentle sentence of banishment ; for these worthy ministers gave it as their opinion, openly in an English court, that strangling and beheading was a part of his Highness's prerogative. But I should beg pardon for attempting to be ludicrous upon an occasion so very serious, not indeed because a man of Mr. Mostyn's stamp, a contemner, and, as far as a very little wit will enable him, a ridiculer of all public spirit and sentiment, a deserter of his noble friend and patron,\* on the first appearance that he no longer possessed the power of serving him farther.

That a man of this stamp should be intoxicated with authority, and run into violence and absurdity, when removed from immediate checks, is not to be wondered at, nor that such a governor should be furnished with a dull mercenary secretary, ready to execute the mandates of his principal, be they ever so iniquitous and preposterous ; but that there should be found a single officer of rank, of no despicable parts, and some reading, to encourage, advise and justify measures so repugnant to the spirit of our constitution and the rights of mankind, is astonishing, and in the highest degree alarming ; for, if such notions become fashionable amongst the military, our laws are but a parapet of paper, which the sword is ready to cut through on the first hint from a dictator. The idea, I say, of such principles becoming fashionable in the army must give the most serious alarm to every individual who does not wish annihilation to the present liberties of these islands, and enslavement to their posterity. But what follows, is more particularly a matter of melancholy concern to our fellow subjects, the colonists of America, the Canadians, and the people of Minorca. They are, it seems, if aggrieved, to seek redress from the king and council ; but if they have reason to think that their redressers will become partisans of those who oppress

\* Lord Rockingham ; to whom Mr. Mostyn owed all his great preferments ; he opposed his patron when minister, because he knew it would please the cabinet.

them, what must be the situation of their minds? Will they not naturally despair, and resign themselves passively to the hand of power, or bravely attempt to redress themselves? To one of these alternatives, a circumstance immediately subsequent to Mr. Mostyn's trial, must tend to reduce them. Reeking with the infamy of being convicted by an honest jury of his country, he dared to present himself at the levee of her first magistrate, where he, who is the head, and in fact creates and uncreates this court from which redress and equity are to flow, he who should consider himself as the corrector of abuses, and avenger of wrongs, could attempt to be facetious on the occasion. Well, General, says the King, so you have been cast; and who were the counsel employed by your doughty adversary? The General, a veteran courtier, long accustomed to royal waggery, smartly replied, the learned serjeant Glynn, and the profound Duke of Richmond. This was so prodigiously witty, that the whole circle, lords of the bed-chamber, maids of honour, and privy-council, all burst into a loud laugh.\*

This may be a very excellent joke at St. James's; but I can assure St. James's, that in other places it savours but of shallow wit, and that it only serves as a proof, for which there was no occasion, of the weakness of the heads, and corruption of the hearts, within those walls. And I can further assure them, that did such noblemen, and such lawyers, as the duke of Richmond, and serjeant Glynn, form the circle of the drawing-room, it would be more for the honour of his Majesty, and the satisfaction and safety of the nation, than one composed of the Graftons, Sandwiches, Nortons, and Wedderburnes.

\* It is to be observed, that the Treasury paid General Mostyn's damages.

II.

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MEMOIR

OF

MAJOR GENERAL LEE

BY

EDWARD LANGWORTHY.



## PREFACE.

THE following Memoirs and Letters of the late Major General Lee, have been in the possession of the Editor since the year 1786. They were transmitted from America to England by the gentleman whose name is subscribed to the memoirs, and who was a member of Congress for the State of Georgia, for the purpose of publication. In their manuscript state they have been seen by several persons in England, who expressed a strong desire of putting them to the press, which the avocations of the person to whom they were entrusted, and his not being acquainted with such undertakings, had caused him to neglect.

As the subject of Revolutions is again renewed by what has occurred in France, it is presumed that whatever relates to the Mother-Revolution, that of America, will, at least, afford entertainment to the curious, and contribute to encrease the general stock of historical knowledge.

The reader may expect to find, in almost everything that relates to General Lee, a great deal of the strong republican character. His attachment to principles of liberty, without regard to place, made him the citizen of the world rather than of any country; and from his earliest youth to the end of his career, this general trait in his character may be traced.

So little of the courtier had he about him that he never descended to intimate any thing. Whatever he spoke or wrote was in the fullest style of expression, or strong figure. He used to say of Mr. Paine, the author of *Common Sense*, in America, and since of *Rights of Man*, in England, (of whose writings he was a great admirer,) that “ *he burst forth upon the world like Jove*

*in thunder ;* " and this strength of conception, so natural to General Lee, had it not been mixed with a turn equally as strong for satire, and too much eccentricity of temper, would have rendered his conversation perpetually entertaining.

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EDITOR.

LONDON, February, 1792.

MEMOIR  
OF  
MAJOR GENERAL LEE.

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THE family of the Lees is both ancient and respectable, many of them having had connections and intermarriages with the principal families in the English nation; and, from a pedigree done for Mr. Thomas Lee,\* distributor and collector of the stamp-duties for the county and city of Chester, North Wales, we learn that the General's father was John Lee of Dernhall in the said county, who was some time a Captain of Dragoons, afterwards Lieutenant Colonel of General Barrel's regiment from 1717 to 1742, at which time he was promoted to a Regiment of Foot. He married Isabella, second daughter of Sir Henry Bunbury, of Stanney, in the county of Chester, Baronet: by this lady he had three sons, Thomas, Harry and Charles, the youngest, who is the subject of these memoirs.

From his early youth he was ardent in the pursuit of knowledge; and being an officer at eleven years of age, may be considered as born in the army; which, though it deprived him of some regularity with respect to the mode of his education, yet his genius led him assiduously to cultivate the fields of science, and he acquired a competent skill in the Greek and Latin; while his fondness for travelling gave him also an opportunity of attaining the Italian, Spanish, German, and French languages.

\* In 1723.

Having laid a good foundation, tactics became his favourite study, in which he spent much time and pains, desiring nothing more than to distinguish himself in the profession of arms. We find him very early in America, commanding a Company of Grenadiers of the 44th regiment; and he was at the battle of Ticonderoga, where General Abercrombie was defeated. Here, it is said, he was shot through the body; but fortunately his wound did not prove mortal.

When he returned to England from America, after the reduction of Montreal, he found a general peace was in contemplation. The cession of Canada was talked of, which gave great uneasiness to every American, as it appeared prejudicial to their interest and safety. On this occasion he exerted himself, and published a pamphlet shewing the importance of this country, which was much approved of by all the friends to America. The celebrated Dr. Franklin, in particular, was pleased to compliment him, and said "that it could not fail of making a salutary impression." In the year 1762, he bore a Colonel's commission, and served under General Burgoyne in Portugal; and in this service he handsomely distinguished himself.

The Spaniards had formed a design of invading that kingdom, and had assembled an army on the frontiers of Estremadura, with an intention of penetrating into the province of Alentejo. Count La Lippe was the commanding officer of the Portuguese army, who formed a design of attacking an advanced body of the Spaniards, which lay on their frontiers, in a town called Valentia de Alcantara.

This enterprise was committed to Brigadier General Burgoyne, who effected a complete surprize on the town, took the general who was to have commanded in the intended invasion, with a number of other officers, and one of the best regiments in the Spanish service was entirely destroyed. But notwithstanding this, and several subsequent skirmishes, the Spanish army continued masters of the country, and nothing remained but the



passage of the Tagus, to enable them to take up their quarters in Alentejo.

General Burgoyne, who was posted with an attention to obstruct them in their passage, lay in the neighbourhood, and within view of a detached camp, composed of a considerable body of the enemy's cavalry, which lay near a village called Villa Velha. As he observed that the enemy kept no very soldierly guard in this post, and were uncovered both in their rear and their flanks, he conceived a design of falling on them by surprise. The execution of his design was entrusted to his friend Colonel Lee, who, in the night of October 8th, fell upon their rear, turned their camp, made a considerable slaughter, dispersed the whole party, destroyed their magazines, and returned with scarce any loss.

When a general conclusion was at length put to the war, he returned to England from Portugal, after having received the thanks of his Portuguese Majesty for his services; and Count La Lippe recommended him in the strongest terms to the English Court. He had, at this period, a friend and patron in high office, one of the principal Secretaries of State; so that there was every reason for him to have expected promotion in the English army. But here his attachment, his enthusiasm for America, interfered, and prevented. The great Indian, or what we called Pondiacks War, broke out, which the ministerial agents thought their interest to represent as a matter of no consequence. The friends of America thought the reverse, and asserted it would be attended with dreadful waste, ravage, and desolation. This brought him once more to publish for the defence and protection of this country, by which he lost the favour of the ministry, and shut the door to all hopes of preferment in the English army. But he could not live in idleness and inactivity: he left his native country, and entered into the Polish service, and was of course absent when the stamp act passed; but although absent, he did not cease laboring in the cause of

America, as may be learned from many of his letters. He used every argument, and exerted all the abilities he was master of, with every correspondent he had, in either House of Parliament, of any weight or influence; and at the same time, he had not an inconsiderable number in both.

It must be observed that this famous act had divided almost every court in Europe into two different parties: the one, assertors of the prerogative of the British Parliament; the other, of the rights and privileges of America. General Lee, on this occasion, pleaded the cause of the Colonies with such earnestness as almost to break off all intercourse with the King's ministers at the Court of Vienna, men that he personally loved and esteemed; but, at the same time, it was thought that he pleaded with so much success as to add not a few friends and partizans to America. These circumstances are mentioned, as they serve to demonstrate that a zeal for the welfare of the Colonies, from the General's earliest acquaintance with them, had been a ruling principle of his life. The present volumes will testify what he sacrificed, what he did and what he hazarded, in the last and most important contest which separated the Colonies from their Parent State:—but there is one circumstance that seems to claim a particular attention: which is, that of all the officers who embarked in the American service, he was the only man who could acquire no additional rank, and perhaps the only one whose fortune could not have been impaired, or at least the tenure by which it was held, changed from its former condition into a precarious and arbitrary one, by the success of the British ministry's schemes; for, had they been completed to the full extent of their wishes, the condition of his fortune had not been altered for the worse: his fortune, though not great, was easy, and, it may be said, affluent, for a private gentleman; a detail of which the editor is enabled to collect from his papers.

1st. The General had four hundred and eighty pounds

*per annum*, on a mortgage in Jamaica, paid punctually.

2dly. An estate of two hundred pounds *per annum* in Middlesex, for another gentleman's life; but whose life he had ensured against his own.

3dly. A thousand pounds on a turnpike in England, at four *per cent.* interest.

4thly. One thousand five hundred pounds, at five *per cent.*

5thly. His half pay, one hundred and thirty-six pounds *per annum*; in all, nine hundred and thirty-one pounds *per annum*, clear income: besides this, about twelve hundred pounds in his agent's hands, and different debts.—He had, likewise, ten thousand acres of land in the island of St. John, which had been located and settled at the expence of seven hundred pounds; and a mandamus for twenty thousand acres in East Florida.

This is the state of the General's fortune when he engaged in the late American contest; and this fortune would have been totally unaffected though the prerogative of taxing America without her consent had been established and confirmed: the full possession of it was secure, and independent of her fate. But these considerations did not influence his mind: he gave up security for insecurity, certainty for uncertainty; he threw into the lap of America, without any chance of winning; he staked all on the die of her fortune: if she succeeded, he could not be better; if she miscarried, his whole was lost. His rank, as before observed, acquired no addition; but the contrary, for a stop was put to its progress in the two other services, the Polish and the English.

The General, who could never stay long in one place, during the years 1771, 1772, to the fall of 1773, had rambled all over Europe; but we can collect nothing material relative to the adventures of his travels, as his memorandum-books only mention the names of the towns and cities through which he passed. That he

was a most rapid and very active traveller, is evident : it appears also, that he was engaged with an officer in Italy in an affair of honour, by which he lost the use of two of his fingers ; but having recourse to pistols, the Italian was slain, and he immediately obliged to fly for his life. His warmth of temper drew him into many rencounters of this kind ; in all which he acquitted himself with singular courage, sprightliness of imagination, and great presence of mind.

Much dissatisfied with the appearance of the political horizon at London, on the 16th of August, 1773, he embarked on board the packet for New-York, where he arrived on the 10th of November following, and had a very severe fit of the gout. At this period, the controversy between Great Britain and her Colonies began to be serious ; and the General concerted a design of taking a part in favour of America, in case it came to an open rupture.

The destruction of the British East-India company's tea at Boston, the 16th of December, was a prelude to the calamities that afterwards ensued. At this crisis, General Lee's mind was not inobservant or inactive ; his conversation, his pen, animated the colonists to a great degree, and persuaded them to make a persevering resistance.

During this winter, he visited Philadelphia, Williamsburgh, and several other places in Virginia and Maryland ; and returned to Philadelphia, a few months before the first Congress met in that city, on the 5th of September. Encouraging and observing what was going forward here, he then paid a visit to New-York, Rhode-Island, and Boston, where he arrived on the 1st of August, 1774. The most active political characters on the American theatre, now hailed him, and were happy in his acquaintance, not a little pleased with his sanguine, lively temper ; considering his presence among them at this crisis, as a most fortunate and propitious omen. General Gage had now issued his proclamation ; and though Lee was on half-pay in the British service,

it did not prevent him from expressing his sentiments in terms of the most pointed severity against the ministry. In short, he blazed forth a Whig of the first magnitude, and communicated a portion of his spirit to all with whom he conversed. As he continued travelling, or rather flying from place to place, he became known to all who distinguished themselves in this important opposition: his company and correspondence were courted, and many occasional political pieces, the production of his pen, were eagerly read, and much admired; and from this popularity, there is no reason to doubt but he expected he should soon become the first in military rank on this Continent.

General Gates was settled on a plantation in Berkeley county, Virginia; and having a great friendship for Lee, persuaded him to purchase from a Mr. Hite, a very fine valuable tract of land in his neighbourhood, of about two thousand seven hundred acres, on which were several good improvements.

On this business, he left his friends, in the Northern States, and returned to Virginia, where he remained till the month of May 1775, when he again presented himself at Philadelphia. The American Congress were assembled; and he became daily a greater enthusiast in the cause of liberty. The battle of Lexington, and some other matters, had now ripened the contest; and Lee's active and enterprising disposition was ready for the most arduous purposes. He therefore accepted a commission from the Congress, which was offered to him by some of its principal members; but he found it necessary previously to resign that which he held in the British service. This he did without delay, in a letter transmitted to the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Barrington, his Majesty's Secretary at War; assuring his Lordship, that although he had renounced his half-pay, yet, whenever it should please his Majesty to call him forth to any honourable service against the natural hereditary enemies of his country, or in defence of his most just rights and dignity, no man would obey

the righteous summons with more zeal and alacrity than himself: at the same time, the General expressed his disapprobation of the present measures, in the most direct terms; declaring them to be "so absolutely subversive of the rights and liberties of every individual subject, so destructive to the whole empire at large, and ultimately so ruinous to his Majesty's own person, dignity, and family, that he thought himself obliged in conscience, as a citizen, Englishman, and a soldier of a free State, to exert his utmost to defeat them."

Professing these sentiments, he received a Continental commission of the rank of Major General. As he had made war his study from his youth, seen a variety of service, and distinguished himself for his courage and abilities, one might have imagined he would have immediately been appointed second in command in the American army: this was not the case; in all countries, kissing goes by favour; and men will be tenacious of any rank bestowed upon them. General Ward, of Massachusetts Bay, by some means or other, had received a commission of prior date; and on this account, perhaps to the injury of the service, he took rank of General Lee, who was at present content to act under him. Whatever his feelings were on this head, he took care to disguise them; and General Ward, on the evacuation of Boston, grew weary of military honour and service, retired to private life, and sent his resignation to Congress.

On the 21st of June, General Washington and General Lee, having received their orders from Congress, left Philadelphia, in order to join the troops assembled near Boston. They were accompanied out of the city, for some miles, by a troop of light horse, and by all the officers of the city militia, on horseback; and at this time General Lee was accounted, and really was, a great acquisition to the American cause. On the road they received the news of the affair at Bunker's-hill, and arrived at the camp at Cambridge the 2d of July 1775. The people of Massachusetts received them with every

testimony of esteem ; and the Congress of that Colony not only presented an address to his Excellency General Washington, as commander in chief, but, from a sense of the military abilities of General Lee, presented one to him also, couched in terms of the highest respect. The General remained with this army till the year 1776, when General Washington, having obtained intelligence of the fitting out of a fleet at Boston, and of the embarkation of troops from thence, which, from the season of the year, and other circumstances, he judged must be destined for a Southern expedition, gave orders to General Lee, to repair with such volunteers as were willing to join him, and could be expeditiously raised, to the city of New-York, with a design to prevent the English from taking possession of New-York and the North-River, as they would thereby command the country, and the communication with Canada. The General, on his arrival, began with putting the city in the best posture of defence the season of the year and circumstances would admit of ; disarming all such persons upon Long Island, and elsewhere, whose conduct and declarations had rendered them suspected of designs unfriendly to the views of Congress. Colonel Ward was ordered to secure the whole body of professed Tories in Long Island. This gave an universal alarm, that even the Congress of New-York endeavoured to check the General in this business, by informing him, in a letter, that the trial and punishment of citizens belonged to the Provincial Congress, and not to any military character, however exalted. To this the General answered, that when the enemy was at the doors, forms must be dispensed with—that his duty to them, to the Continental Congress, and to his own conscience, had dictated the necessity of the measure—that if he had done wrong, he would submit himself to the shame of being reputed rash and precipitate, and undergo the censure of the public ; but he should have the consciousness of his own breast, that the pure motives of serving the community, uncontaminated by pique or



resentment to individuals, urged him to the step. The General also remonstrated against supplying the men of war and Governor Tryon with provisions, as the boats coming to the city must open the means of their receiving every sort of intelligence. "I should," says the General in one of his letters, "be in the highest degree culpable to God, my conscience, and the Continental Congress, in whose service I am engaged, should I suffer, at so dangerous a crisis, a banditti of professed foes of liberty and their country, to remain at liberty to co-operate with, and strengthen the ministerial troops openly in arms, or covertly, and consequently more dangerously, furnish them with intelligence." He also drew up a *Test*, which he ordered his officers to offer to those who were reputed inimical to the American cause: a refusal to take this, was to be construed as no more or less than an avowal of their hostile intentions; upon which, their persons were to be secured, and sent to Connecticut, where it was judged they could not be so dangerous. Thus the General excited the people to every spirited measure, and intimidated by every means the friends to the English government. At this time, Captain Vandeput, of the *Asia*, seized a Lieutenant Tiley, and kept him on board his ship in irons. On the principles of retaliation, Lee took into custody Mr. Stephens, an officer of Government; and informed the Captain what he had done, and that this gentleman should not be released until Lieut. Tiley was returned. This had the desired effect. His determined and decisive disposition had an amazing influence both on the army and people; and the steps he proposed for the management of those who disapproved of the American resistance, struck a terror wherever he appeared.

Congress had now received the account of General Montgomery's unsuccessful expedition against Quebec. As flattering expectations were entertained of the success of this officer, the event threw a gloom on American affairs. To remedy this disaster, they turned their eyes to General Lee, and Congress resolved that he



should forthwith repair to Canada, and take upon him the command of the army of the United Colonies in that province. This, though he was just recovered from a fit of the gout, he accepted; but while preparations were making for the important undertaking, Congress changed their determination, and appointed him to the command of the Southern department, in which he became very conspicuous, as a vigilant, brave and active officer. His extensive correspondence, his address under every difficulty, and his unwearied attention to the duties of his station, all evinced his great military capacity, and extreme usefulness to the cause he had espoused, and was warmly engaged in.—Every testimony of respect was paid him by the people of the Northern Colonies, and he experienced a similar treatment in his journey to the Southward. On his arrival at Williamsburgh, every one expressed their high satisfaction at his presence among them; and the troops of that city embraced the opportunity of presenting him with an address, expressive of their sanguine hopes and firm resolutions of uniting with him in the common cause. This example was followed at Newbern, North-Carolina; and a committee was appointed by the inhabitants of that town, to wait upon him in their name, and, in an address, to thank him for his generous and manly exertions in defence of American rights and liberties; and to offer him their cordial congratulations for his appearance among them, at a time when their province was actually invaded by a powerful fleet and army; and to express their happiness to find the command of the troops destined for their protection, placed in the hands of a gentleman of his distinguished character.

Great too was the joy in South-Carolina, where his presence was seasonable and absolutely necessary, as Sir Henry Clinton was actually preparing for an invasion of that province. The minds of all ranks of people were considerably elevated at the sight of him; it diffused an ardour among the military, attended with the most salutary consequences; and his diligence and

activity at Charleston, previous to the attack upon Sullivan's island, will be long remembered. From a perusal of his letters and directions to the officers commanding at that post, we may justly infer, that America was under no small obligations to him for the signal success there obtained. And here it may be mentioned, as somewhat remarkable, that when General Lee received orders at Cambridge, to repair to New-York, to watch the motions of the British, he met General Clinton the very day he arrived there;—when he came to Virginia, he found him in Hampton Road—and just after his arrival in North Carolina, General Clinton left Cape Fear—Their next meeting was at Fort Sullivan, which must have made Lee appear to Clinton as his evil genius, haunting him for more than eleven hundred miles, along a coast of vast extent, and meeting him at Philippi.

The affair of Sullivan's island was a most extraordinary deliverance; for if the English had succeeded, it is more than probable the Southern Colonies would at that time have been compelled to have submitted to the English government. Dreadful was the cannonade, but without effect. Porto Bello, Boccochico, and the other castle at Carthagera, were obliged to strike to Vernon; Fort Lewis in Saint Domingo yielded to the metal of Admiral Knowles; but in this instance, an unfinished battery, constructed with Palmeto logs, resisted, for a whole day, the twelve and eighteen pounders of the British fleet, to the astonishment and admiration of every spectator.

The fleet and army under Sir Henry Clinton and Sir Peter Parker being repulsed, General Lee then flew to the assistance of Georgia, where he continued for some weeks, planning schemes to put that province in a state of defence, and to make an excursion into East Florida, as their Southern frontiers were suffering considerably by the incursions of Indians and others from that quarter.

About this time, the Congress were informed by Gen-

eral Washington, that Clinton, with the troops under his command, had returned, and joined General Howe at Staten-island. In consequence of this intelligence, the Congress were convinced that the English, by collecting their whole force into a point, were determined to make a most vigorous exertion at New-York; and in order to ensure success there, were disposed for the present to overlook every other object. The getting possession of that city, and the junction of the two armies under General Howe and Burgoyne, it was the Congress's opinion, were the grand objects they had in view, and for the attainment of which they would give up every inferior consideration. Lee's success in the Southern department had increased the good opinion they had conceived of him; his reputation was in its zenith; and they now applied to him for assistance, in the present important situation of their affairs. An express was despatched to Georgia, directing him to repair as soon as possible to Philadelphia, there to receive such orders as they might judge expedient. He returned with great expedition, the beginning of October, and waited on Congress immediately on his arrival, who, after consulting him, resolved that he should without delay repair to the camp at Haerlem, with leave, if he should judge proper, to visit the posts in New-Jersey.

He arrived at General Washington's army just time enough to prevent it from being blockaded in York-island, the circumstance of which hath been thus related. General Washington was at that time under a necessity of consulting his council of officers, before he could take any step of consequence; and they, contrary to his opinion, were for waiting an attack in their own lines on York-island—Extensive barracks had been erected, and large preparations made for such a step. Sir William Howe, finding the Americans too strong to be attacked with safety from the side of New-York, leaving Lord Piercy with a body of troops opposite the river, embarked the rest in his flat boats, passed safely the dangerous passage of Hell-Gate, and landed on

Frog's Neck, an island separated by a small creek from West Chester. Here he remained a week, under a pretence of waiting for stores and provisions; while the Americans, in consequence of their resolutions, continued on the Island. The very evening before General Howe made a movement, General Lee arrived at General Washington's camp; *his opinion* of their dangerous situation convinced the council of war; and, that night, a precipitate movement extricated them from the danger. The next morning, General Howe landed on Pell's Manor, a point separated from Frog's Neck by a channel of scarce 200 yards: he then extended his army across to Hudson's-river; but there was then no enemy to intercept. Had he, instead of trifling away his time, crammed up on Frog's Neck, landed only on Pell's Point, not a soul of the American army would have escaped. Hitherto General Lee had been successful, and was universally esteemed; but fortune now began to reverse the scene. On the 13th of December 1776, at the head of all the men he could collect, he was marching to join General Washington, who had assembled the Pennsylvania militia, to secure the banks of the Delaware.—From the distance of the British cantonments, he was betrayed into a fatal security, by which, in crossing the upper part of New-Jersey from the North river, he fixed his quarters, and lay carelessly guarded at some distance from the main body. This circumstance being communicated to Colonel Harcourt, who commanded the British light horse, and had then made a desultory excursion at the head of a small detachment, he conducted his measures with such address and activity, that Lee was carried off, though several guarded posts and armed patrols lay in the way. Great was the joy of the British, and equal the consternation of the Americans, at this unexpected event. The making of a single officer prisoner, in other circumstances, would have been a matter of little moment; but in the present state of the continental forces, where a general deficiency of military skill

prevailed, and the inexperience of the officers was even a greater grievance, the loss of a commander, whose spirit of enterprize was directed by great knowledge in his profession, acquired by actual service, was indeed of the utmost importance. The Congress, on hearing this news, ordered their President to write to General Washington, desiring him to send a flag to General Howe, for the purpose of enquiring in what manner General Lee was treated ; and if he found that it was not agreeable to his rank and character, to send a remonstrance to General Howe on the subject. This produced much inconvenience to both sides, and much calamity to individuals. A cartel had sometime before been established for the exchange of prisoners between the Generals Howe and Washington, which had hitherto been carried into execution, as far as time and circumstances would admit. As Lee was particular obnoxious to Government, it was said that General Howe was tied down by his instructions, from parting with him upon any terms, if the fortune of war should throw him into his power. General Washington not having at this time any prisoners of equal rank with Lee, proposed to exchange six field officers for him, the number being intended to balance that disparity ; or if this was not accepted, he required that he should be treated suitably to his station, according to the practice established among polished nations, till an opportunity offered for a direct and equal exchange. To this it was answered, that as Mr. Lee was a deserter from his Majesty's service, he was not to be considered as a prisoner of war ; that he did not at all come within the conditions of the cartel, nor could he receive any of its benefits. This brought on a fruitless discussion, whether General Lee, who had resigned his half pay at the beginning of the troubles, could be considered as a deserter ; or whether he could with justice be excluded from the general benefits of a cartel, in which no particular exception of person had been made. In the mean time, General Lee was guarded with all the

strictness which a State criminal of the first magnitude could have experienced in the most dangerous political conjuncture. This conduct not only suspended the operation of the cartel, but induced retaliation on the American side; and Colonel Campbell, who had hitherto been treated with great humanity by the people of Boston, was now thrown into a dungeon.

Those British officers who were prisoners in the Southern Colonies, though not treated with equal rigour, were, however, abridged of their parole liberty. It was at the same time declared, that their future treatment should in every degree be regulated by that which General Lee experienced, and that their persons should be answerable, in the utmost extent, for any violence that was offered to him. Thus matters continued till the capture of the British army under General Burgoyne at Saratoga, October 17th, 1777. A change of conduct towards him then took place; he was allowed his parole in New-York, lodged in the same house with Lieutenant Colonel Butler of the 38th, dined with General Robertson commandant of the town, and with many principal officers and families, and a short time after was exchanged.

The first military scene in which General Lee appeared after his liberation, was the battle of Monmouth, which terminated his career in the American army. Before this affair, his character in general was very respectable; many of the warm friends to America, highly valued the important services he had rendered to the United States.

From the beginning of the contest, he had excited and directed the military spirit which prevailed the continent; his conversation raised an emulation among the officers, and he taught them to pay a proper attention to the health, cloathing, and comfortable subsistence of their men: add to this, his zeal was unwearied in inculcating the principles of liberty among all ranks of people; hence it is said, that a strong party was formed in Congress, and by some discontented officers in the army,



to raise Lee to the first command; and it hath been suggested by many, that General Lee's conduct at the battle of Monmouth, was intended to effect this plan; for, could the odium of the defeat have been at that time thrown on General Washington, and his attack of the British army made to appear rash and imprudent, there is great reason to suppose he would have been deprived of his command. It hath been observed by some writers on this subject, that when General Lee was taken prisoner, the American army was on no par with the Royal forces; but the case was much changed on his return from his captivity. He found them improved, and daring enough to attack even the British grenadiers with firmness and resolution. Had not this been the case, and General Lee, when ordered to attack the rear of the Royal army, seen his men beat back with disgrace, unwilling to rally, and acting with fear and trepidation, his retreat would have been necessary, his conduct crowned with applause, and his purposes effected; but, disappointed in this view, the retreat hath been imputed to himself, as he could not alledge the want of spirit in his troops for the justification of his conduct.

The British army, early on Thursday the 25th of June, completed their evacuation of Philadelphia, having before transported their stores and most of their artillery into the Jerseys, where they had thrown up some works, and several regiments were encamped;—they manned the lines the preceding night, and retreated over the commons, crossing at Gloucester Point. A party of the American horse pursued them very close; however nothing very material happened till the 28th, when, about three o'clock in the morning, the British army moved on their way to Middletown Point. About eleven o'clock, the American van, commanded by General Lee, overtook them; but he soon retreated and was met by General Washington, who formed on the first proper piece of ground near Monmouth Court-house. While this was doing, two pieces of cannon, supported by Colonel Livingston and Colonel Stewart,

with a picked corps of 300 men, kept off the main body of the English, and made a great slaughter. Very severe skirmishing ensued ; and the American army advancing, the British made their last efforts upon a small body of Pennsylvania troops at and about Mr. Tenant's house ; they then gave way, leaving the field covered with dead and wounded. General Washington's troops pursued for about a mile, when, night coming on, and the men exceedingly fatigued with marching, and the hot weather, they halted about half a mile beyond the ground of the principal action.—The British took a strong post in their front, secured on both flanks by morasses and thick woods, where they remained until about twelve at night, and then retreated. In consequence of this action, General Lee was put under arrest, and tried by a Court Martial at Brunswick, the 4th July following. The charges exhibited against him were.

1st. For disobedience of orders in not attacking the enemy on the 28th of June, agreeable to repeated instructions.

2dly. For misbehaviour before the enemy on the same day, by making an unnecessary, disorderly, and shameful retreat.

3dly. For disrespect to the commander in chief, in two letters, dated the 1st July, and the 28th June.

The letters, on which the third charge is founded, are as follows :

*Camp, English Town, 1st July, 1778.*

SIR,

From the knowledge I have of your Excellency's character, I must conclude, that nothing but the misinformation of some very stupid, or misrepresentation of some very wicked person, could have occasioned your making use of such very singular expressions as you did, on my coming up to the ground where you had taken post : they implied, that I was guilty either of disobedience of orders, of want of conduct, or want of courage. Your Excellency will therefore infinitely oblige me, by



letting me know, on which of these three articles you ground your charge, that I may prepare for my justification ; which I have the happiness to be confident I can do, to the Army, to the Congress, to America, and to the World in general. Your Excellency must give me leave to observe, that neither yourself, nor those about your person, could, from your situation, be in the least judges of the merits or demerits of our manœuvres ; and, to speak with a becoming pride, I can assert, that to these manœuvres the success of the day was entirely owing. I can boldly say, that had we remained on the first ground, or had we advanced, or had the retreat been conducted in a manner different from what it was, this whole army, and the interests of America, would have risked being sacrificed. I ever had, and I hope ever shall have, the greatest respect and veneration for General Washington ; I think him endued with many great and good qualities : But in this instance, I must pronounce, that he has been guilty of an act of cruel injustice, towards a man who has certainly some pretensions to the regard of every servant of his country ; and, I think, Sir, I have a right to demand some reparation for the injury committed ; and unless I can obtain it, I must, in justice to myself, when the campaign is closed, which I believe will close the war, retire from a service, at the head of which is placed a man capable of offering such injuries :—but at the same time, in justice to you, I must repeat, that I, from my soul believe, that it was not a motion of your own breast, but instigated by some of those *dirty carwigs* who will for ever insinuate themselves near persons in high office ; for I am really convinced, that when General Washington acts from himself, no man in his army will have reason to complain of injustice and indecorum.

I am, sir, and I hope ever shall have reason to continue,

Your most sincerely devoted

Humble Servant,

CHARLES LEE.

His Excellency Gen. Washington.

*Head Quarters, English-Town, June 28th, 1778.*

SIR,

I received your letter, (dated, through mistake, the 1st of July,) expressed, as I conceive, in terms highly improper. I am not conscious of having made use of any very singular expressions at the time of my meeting you, as you intimate. What I recollect to have said, was dictated by duty, and warranted by the occasion. As soon as circumstances will admit, you shall have an opportunity either of justifying yourself to the Army, to Congress, to America, and to the World in general, or of convincing them that you are guilty of a breach of orders, and of misbehaviour before the enemy on the 28th instant, in not attacking them as you had been directed, and in making an unnecessary, disorderly, and shameful retreat.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Major Gen. Lee.

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*Camp, June 28th, 1778.*

SIR,

I beg your Excellency's pardon for the inaccuracy in misdating my letter.—You cannot afford me greater pleasure than in giving me the opportunity of shewing to America, the sufficiency of her respective servants. I trust, that the temporary power of office, and the tinsel dignity attending it, will not be able, by all the mists they can raise, to offscate the bright rays of truth. In the mean time, your Excellency can have no objections to my retiring from the army.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient,

Humble Servant,

CHARLES LEE.

Gen. Washington.

*Camp, June 30th, 1778.*

SIR,

Since I had the honour of addressing my letter by Colonel Fitzgerald to your Excellency, I have reflected on both your situation and mine ; and beg leave to observe, that it will be for our mutual convenience, that a Court of Inquiry should be immediately ordered ; but I could wish it might be a Court Martial : for, if the affair is drawn into length, it may be difficult to collect the necessary evidences, and perhaps might bring on a paper-war betwixt the adherents to both parties, which may occasion some disagreeable feuds on the Continent ; for all are not my friends, nor your admirers.

I must entreat, therefore, from your love of justice, that you will immediately exhibit your charge ; and that on the first halt, I may be brought to a trial.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient,

Humble Servant,

CHARLES LEE.

His Excellency Gen. Washington.

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The Court met, by several adjournments, till the 12th of August, when they found the unfortunate General guilty of the several charges brought against him, and sentenced him to be suspended from any commission in the armies of the United States of North America for the term of twelve months. But it was usual in America, and thought necessary, that the sentence of every Court Martial should be ratified or confirmed by Congress ; the proceedings, therefore, of the Court, were accordingly transmitted to them, and the General repaired to Philadelphia to await their decision. During his stay there on this business, he was involved in several disputes ; and though his affair might be considered as yet *sub judice*, yet the conversa-

tion of the city was rather against him, which induced him to publish, as it were, a second defence; and as this may not be so well known to the public as the elegant and masterly defence in his trial, which hath been republished in Europe, I shall insert it in this place.

GENERAL LEE'S *Vindication to the Public.*

The different commentators on the orders I received from Gen. Washington, on the 28th of June, have, I think, construed them into no more than three different senses. I shall, therefore, for argument's sake, give the world leave to suppose them to have been any one of these three:—1st. To attack the enemy in whatever situation, and in whatever force I found them, without considering consequences.

2d. To contrive the means of bringing on a general engagement.

3d. To annoy them as much as possible, without risking any thing of great importance; that is, in fact, to act with a great degree of latitude, according to my own discretion.

Now, I say, granting any one of these three to have been the orders I received, it is manifest, that I did literally and effectually comply, as far as depended on myself, and on human means. As to the first, notwithstanding the attempt, by a low evasion, to prove that the orders I gave were only to *advance* on the enemy, it is clear from Captain Mercer's evidence, that General Wayne and Colonel Butler were ordered, not only to advance, but in precise terms to attack;—it is clear, that I did, with the three brigadiers on the right, make the only movement possible to accomplish this end—it is clear that I did not wish, or give any orders for

\* It must appear somewhat extraordinary, that when the principal and heaviest charge brought against me, was the disobedience of orders, these orders that it seems I disobeyed, should never have been attempted to be ascertained to the Court by the proper authority, but were left to the conjecture and wild constructions of those who might take the trouble to guess, and to the hardness of those who might chuse to invent.

a retrograde manœuvre from the first point of action, and that, even when I was informed of our left being abandoned, the retreat, however necessary, was, I am ashamed to own it, done contrary to my orders, and contrary to my intentions. I say I am ashamed to own it; for if the British cavalry had vigorously pushed on our right, they might have turned our flank, taken us in reverse, and we had been lost. There is one supposition, and indeed only one (and that, for the General's honour, is too monstrous to be admitted) that would render me criminal; it is, that he had positively commanded me, that after the attack commenced, whatever were my circumstances, or whatever were my numbers, from thence I should not, from any consideration, recede an inch. Now, if such I had conceived to have been his intention, so great is my opinion of the valour, zeal, and obedience of the troops, and so well I think I know myself, that I do really believe we should all have perished on the first spot; but I never had, and it is almost impossible I should have, an idea that such was his plan; and it is evident that it was not; consequently, in seeking a better position in our rear, I could be guilty of no disobedience. Upon the whole, admitting the orders I received to have been (as it has been insinuated) to attack, without any consideration of the force or situation of the enemy, they were as fully and rigidly obeyed, circumstanced as I was, as it was possible for any human officer to obey orders of such a nature. In the next place, if the General's instructions are construed to be, that I should find the means of bringing on a general engagement, it is difficult to imagine a more efficacious method than that which was pursued. But I must here beg leave to observe, that those gentlemen who talk so familiarly of bringing on a general engagement, must understand themselves as little as they can be understood by others.

To bring on a general engagement, is not always in our power. An enemy of any capacity will take such measures as not to be under the necessity of fighting

against his inclinations; and, however it may be received, I cannot help being persuaded, that some of the British generals are not deficient in this great essential. Clinton, Grey, and Erskine, were bred up, and considered no despicable officers in one of the best schools of Europe. Prince Ferdinand and his nephew, the hereditary prince, think, it is said, and do most certainly speak very honourably of them. Now, although it must be supposed that men of this stamp will make it a rule to retain the power of refusing a general engagement, there are strong grounds for believing, that on this day (whether from our manœuvres, or from the often ungovernable impetuosity of the British troops) they would have been put under the necessity of committing the most considerable part of their army to the decision of arms, if the opportunity on our side had been availed of. They were tempted to pass three of the great ravines which traverse the plain; and there is room to flatter ourselves they would have passed the last, if they had been wisely suffered. They would then have been actually in our power; that is, they would have been under the necessity of fighting against unequal force; for they had scarcely the possibility of retreating, and it was at our option to engage whatever part of the army we thought proper, whether the whole, one half, or only a third, as they had immediately emerged from the ravine, and before they could have had time to develop and form; our rear was, on the contrary, quite clear and unembarrassed, and were, in fact, entire masters of our manœuvres; at the same time, Colonel Morgan, and the militia on the flanks, by this separation of the major part of the enemy's army to so great a distance from their baggage, and the body covering the baggage, would have had a much fairer opportunity of making their respective attacks, than if they had remained more compact: thus, if any thing is meant by finding the means of bringing on a general engagement, it was done, and in the most salutary manner, to the utmost extent of human possibility.

We come now to the last supposition, *viz.* That the orders I received (which in fact is the truth, unless they had no meaning at all) were to annoy the enemy, strike a partial blow, but without risking any thing of great importance; or, in other terms, to act in a great measure discretionally.\* And here I defy the most acute military critic of the world, to point out a more effectual method than what was pursued; for, had we taken post on the hither or western margin of the first ravine, as General Wayne seems to think we ought to have done, (and admitting that in this position our flanks could have been secure, which they certainly were not,) or on the margin of any of the other ravines in our rear, the last not excepted, if the last had been tenable, how could we possibly have annoyed the enemy, or struck a partial blow? The consequence would at most have been this, that we might have remained gazing on and cannonading each other for some time, and the moment they chose to retire, they could have done it at their leisure, and with impunity; for, by all the rules of war, and what is more, by all the rules of common sense, we could not have ventured to pursue them, because we should have put, if not impracticable, at least very dangerous, defiles in our rear; and if they had turned back upon us, we should have been effectually in their power, unless we could have insured victory to ourselves with very unequal numbers; but, by drawing them over all the ravines, they were as much in our power; besides, it must occur to every man who is not destitute of common reason, that the further they were from their ships and the heights of Middletown, the point of their security, the more they were (to use the military language) in the air.

To these considerations may be added, that the ground we found them on, was extremely favourable to the nature of their troops; and that we drew them

\* It must be remarked, that disobedience to discretionary orders is, *prima facie*, a glaring absurdity; it is an impossibility; and yet it has been endeavoured to prove me guilty of this impossibility.



into, as favourable to ours. The ground we found them on, was calculated for cavalry, in which they comparatively abounded; and that which we drew them into, as much the reverse. In fine, admitting that the order I received was any one of the three referred to, and supposing we had been as perfectly acquainted with every yard of the country as we were utterly ignorant of it, I am happy to be able consciously to pronounce, that were the transactions of that day to pass over again, there is no one step I took which I would not again take. There is no one thing I did which does not demonstrate that I conducted myself as an obedient, prudent, and, let me add, spirited officer; \* and I do from my soul sincerely wish that a court of inquiry, composed of the ablest soldiers in the world, were to sit in judgment, and enjoined to canvass with the utmost rigour every circumstance of my conduct on this day, and on their decision my reputation or infamy to be forever established. There is, however, I confess, the strongest reason to believe (but for this omission I am no ways responsible) that, had a proper knowledge of the theatre of action been obtained, as it might, and ought to have been, its nature and different situations, with their references studied, and, in consequence, a general plan of action wisely concerted and digested, a most important, perhaps a decisive blow might have been struck, but not by adopting any one measure that any one of my censurers had been fortunate enough to think of. I have already said, that had we remained on the ground where the attack commenced, or on the margin of the first ravine, which General Wayne seems to think was a good position, we should probably have been lost; and I believe I may safely assert, that had we attached ourselves to the second position, in front of Carr's house, reconnoitred by Mons. Du Portail, on the

\* This style, on ordinary occasions, would appear a most intolerable and disgusting gasconade; but when a man's conduct has been so grossly misrepresented and calumniated, as mine has been, the strongest language is justifiable in his defence.



hill which Colonel Hamilton was so strongly prepossessed in favour of, and allowing our flanks to be secure in any of these positions, which it is evident they were not, security is the only thing we could have had to boast of. The security of the enemy would have been equally great; but any possibility of annoying them we certainly had not. I assert, then, that if we had acted wisely, it was our business to let one, two, or three thousand pass the last ravine, in the rear of which, and on the eminence pointed out to me by Mr. Wikoff, and to General Washington by Colonel Ray,\* the main body of our army was posted, fresh and unfatigued; whereas those of the enemy were extremely harassed, or, indeed, worn down to so low a degree of debility, that had they once passed, they had little chance of re-passing; the ground was commanding, and, to us, in all respects advantageous. A sort of natural glacis, extending itself in our front, from the crest of the eminence quite down to the ravine, over which there was only one narrowed pass, the plain so narrowed as to give no play to the manœuvres of their cavalry; and at two or three hundred yards distance in the rear, a space of ground most happily adapted to the arrangement of a second line.† This ground, from the nature of its front, is almost entirely protected from the annoyance of the enemy's cannon; and, of course, well calculated for the respiration of a body of troops, such as my detachment was, fatigued, but not dispirited by action, and the excessive heat of the weather; here they might have taken breath; here they might have been refreshed, and, in a very short time, refitted at least to act as a line of support, which was all that, in these circumstances, could be necessary. I proposed to the General

\*To these two gentlemen not a little credit for the success of the 28th of June is due.

† It may be objected, that a part of my detachment there, under Scott and Maxwell, had already filed off in the rear, but they might easily have been brought up. It is evident they might, as not long afterwards a part of them were ordered, and did march up. It must be observed, that I myself was totally ignorant that any part of them had filed off; but those I had with me would have formed a very respectable line of reserve.

to form them as such, but was precipitately ordered, and, I confess, in a manner that extremely ruffled me, to three miles distance in the rear.

Thus, in my opinion, was a most glorious opportunity lost; for what followed on both sides was only a distant, unmeaning, inefficacious cannonade; and what has been so magnificently stiled a pursuit, was no more than taking up the ground which the British troops could not possibly, and were not (their principle being retreat) interested to maintain.

*P. S.* A thousand wicked and low artifices, during my trial, were used to render me unpopular. One of the principal was, to throw out that I had endeavoured on every occasion, to depreciate the American valour, and the character of their troops. There never was a more impudent falsehood; I appeal to my letters addressed to Mr. Burgoyne—to the whole tenor of my conversation, both previous and subsequent to the commencement of the present war, and to all my publications. It is true, I have often heavily lamented, as to me it appears, the defective constitution of the army; but I have ever had the highest opinion of the courage and other good qualities of the Americans as soldiers; and the proofs that my opinion was just, are numerous and substantial.

To begin with the affair of Bunker's-hill, I may venture to pronounce that there never was a more dangerous, a more execrable situation, than these brave and unfortunate men (if those who die in the glorious cause of Liberty can be termed unfortunate) were placed in; they had to encounter with a body of troops, both in point of spirit and discipline, not to be surpassed in the whole world, headed by an officer of experience, intrepidity, coolness, and decision. The Americans were composed, in part, of raw lads and old men, half armed, with no practice or discipline, commanded without order, and God knows by whom. Yet what was the event? It is known to the world, that the British troops, notwithstanding their address and gal-

lantry, were most severely handled, and almost defeated.\*

The troops under the command of General Montgomery, in his expedition against St. John's, Chambly, and into Canada, who were chiefly composed of native Americans, as they were from the Eastern States, displayed, by his own account, in a letter I received from that illustrious young man, not only great courage, but zeal and enterprize.

The assault under Arnold, on the lower town of Quebec, was an attempt that would have startled the most approved veterans; and, if they miscarried, it cannot be attributed to a deficiency of valour, but to want of proper information of the circumstances of the place.

The defence of Sullivan's Island, by Colonel Moultrie, might be termed an ordeal. The garrison, both men and officers, entirely raw; the fire furious, and of a duration almost beyond example; their situation extremely critical and dangerous, for the rear was in a manner open; and, if General Clinton could, as it was expected, have landed on the island, there were no resources but in the last desperate resolution.

With respect to the transactions on York and Long Island, I must be silent, as I am ignorant of them; but, from some observations after I joined the army, I have reason to think the fault could not have been in the men, or in the common bulk of officers.

Even the unhappy business of Fort Washington, which was attended with such abominable consequences, and which brought the affairs of America to the brink of ruin, when the circumstances are well considered, did honour to the officers and men, devoted to the defence of this worthless and ridiculous favourite.

The defence of Red-Bank, by Colonel Green, and Mud-Island, by Colonel Smith, forced a confession, even from the most determined infidels on this point, of the

\* The Colonels Stark, Prescott, Little, Gardner, Read, Nixon, and the two Brewers, were entitled to immortal honour for their action on that day; but, according to the usual justice of the writers of newspapers and Gazettes, their names have scarcely been mentioned on the occasion.

British officers, to the honour of American valour. I have often heard them allow, that the defence of these two places *were really handsome things—that no men could have done better*; which, from unwilling mouths, is no small panegyric.

The victory gained by Stark, at Bennington, and the capture of Mr. Burgoyne's whole army, by Gates and Arnold, are, above all, convincing arguments of what excellent ingredients, in all respects, the force of America is composed.

The detail of what passed lately on Rhode-Island is not yet come to my knowledge; but, from all I have been able to collect, the men and officers exhibited great valour and facility, as did their General, discretion, calmness, and good conduct. Upon the whole, I am warranted to say, what I always thought, that no disgrace or calamity has fallen on the arms of America through the whole course of the war, but what must be attributed to some other cause than to the want of valour, of disposition to obedience, or to any other military defect in the men, or the general mass of their officers in their different ranks; and I solemnly declare, that was it at my choice to select from all the nations of the earth to form an excellent and perfect army, I would, without hesitation, give the preference to the Americans. By publishing this opinion, I cannot incur the suspicion of paying my court to their vanity, as it is notoriously the language I have ever held.

I have been told, that one of the crimes imputed to me, is by entertaining a high opinion of the British troops. If this is a crime, I am ready to acknowledge it. There were times, I confess, when the promulgation of such an opinion would have been impolitic, and even criminal; but in these times, it is notorious to the world that my conduct was the reverse. Every thing I wrote, every thing I said, tended to inspire that confidence in their own strength, which it was thought the Americans wanted; and it is believed, that what I said, and what I wrote, had no inconsiderable effect; but

now, circumstanced as we are, I cannot conceive the danger, or even impropriety, in speaking of them as they deserve, particularly as their excellence redounds to the honour of America. I could not help, whilst I was prisoner, being astonished at the bad policy and stupidity of some of the British officers, who made it their constant business to depreciate the character of the Americans in point of courage and sense. I have often expressed my astonishment, making a very natural observation to them, that if the persuasion of their opponents' cowardice and folly were established in the world, the great merits they themselves pretended to must, at the same time, be utterly destroyed. That I have a very great opinion of the British troops, I make no scruple to confess; and unless I had this opinion of them, I do not see what ground I could have for my eulogiums on American valour. This is a truth, simple and clear as the day; but be it as it will, it is now most certain, let the courage and discipline of the British troops be as great as imagination can paint, there is at present no danger from either the one or the other. The dangers that now threaten, are from other quarters; from the want of temper, moderation, economy, wisdom, and decision amongst ourselves; from a childish credulity; and, in consequence of it, a promptness to commit acts of the highest injustice on those who have deserved best at the hands of the community; but above all, from the direct opposites to those qualities, virtues, and principles, without which it is impossible that the mode of government established should be supported for the tenth part of a century. These, I assert, are now the proper objects of our apprehensions, and not any real or supposed excellence in the armies of Great Britain, who has infinitely more reason to fear for her own independence, than to hope for the subjugation of yours.

General Clinton's letter, which has just appeared, has so wonderful an accord with the above essay, that I make no doubt but that some acute gentleman may insinuate that it furnished the hint; but I can appeal to

more than fifty gentlemen of this city, or officers of the army, to whom it was read, previous to the publication of General Clinton's letter, whether a single syllable has been added or varied, the conclusion of the post-script excepted, which has no reference to the affair of Monmouth.

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It was a considerable time before Congress took the General's trial under their consideration, during which our unfortunate hero continued smarting under the frowns of fortune and the malignant tongues of men ; and to add to his sufferings in this state of suspense, he received a letter from Colonel Laurens, one of General Washington's aids, informing him, "that, in contempt of decency and truth, he had publicly abused General Washington in the grossest terms ;" that, "the relation in which he stood to him, forbade him to pass such conduct unnoticed ; he therefore demanded the satisfaction which he was entitled to ; and desired, that as soon as General Lee should think himself at liberty, he would appoint time and place, and name his weapons." Without hesitation this was accepted ; and the General made choice of a brace of pistols, declining the small sword, because he was rather in a weak state of body, having lately received a fall from a horse, and also taken a quantity of medicine to baffle a fit of the gout, which he apprehended. They met according to appointment, and discharged their pistols, when General Lee received a slight wound in his side ; and it hath been said, that on this occasion, he displayed the greatest fortitude and courage.

Shortly after, the proceedings of the court Martial on his trial came under consideration in Congress, and produced debates for several evenings ; but, finally, the sentence was confirmed. The General was much dissatisfied with it, and his mind extremely embittered against one of the members, Mr. William Henry Drayton, of South Carolina. This gentleman's conduct was vitupee-



rated by Lee in the severest language, because he opposed in Congress a division of the several charges brought against him, but argued and insisted upon lumping them all together, to be decided by one question. In this he was ingeniously and warmly opposed by a very amiable and worthy gentleman, Mr. William Paca, a late governor of Maryland. Here we must observe, that prior to this, Mr. Drayton was by no means one of the General's favourites; he had taken some unnecessary liberties with his character, in a charge which he delivered as chief justice to a grand jury in Charleston, South-Carolina. His temper thus exasperated, he could no longer refrain from emphatically expressing his sense of the injuries he had received from Mr. Drayton. These were delivered, intermixed with threatening language, to Mr. Hutson, his colleague and friend, who communicated the same. A correspondence ensued so remarkable for its poignancy of reply, as may be worth preserving in these memoirs.

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*Philadelphia, Feb. 3d, 1779.*

SIR,

My colleague, Mr. Hutson, hath this day mentioned to me, a conversation you had with him, in which you expressed yourself as injured by a misrepresentation of your conduct immediately preceding your captivity by the enemy, in a charge I had the honour to deliver, as Chief Justice, to the Grand Jury of Charleston, South Carolina.

I must inform you, Sir, that on the one hand, I have been repeatedly assured the representation I then made was a true one; and that on the other hand, I have also been assured that it was not founded on fact; and that, immediately upon this latter assurance in South Carolina I took that step which was most likely to lead me to a certainty on the subject, with the avowed design, that if I had injured your reputation, I might be enable to make the most ample reparation; but I did not receive the necessary materials. Those

sentiments of propriety which dictated the first advance on my part then, to acquire them now dictate a like conduct when another opportunity seems to open itself for my arriving at truth, and to do that justice which the case may require. And I do assure you, that if I can be enable to declare, that you did not violate the orders of the commander in chief, respecting your junction with him, when he had retreated to the Delaware in 1776, I shall not only do so in the most pointed terms, but beg your pardon for having, through error and misrepresentation, published the contrary.

To this purpose, I wrote to Major Eustace on the 6th of January 1778, when I was in Charleston, and had no prospect of coming to this part of the Continent; and a copy of the correspondence between him and myself on the occasion I will lay before you, if you desire to see it.

Those principles of honour which must make you feel an injury, make me feel even an idea of having done an injury, and impels me to make a reparation where it is due. I am, Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

WM. HENRY DRAYTON.

Major Gen. Lee.

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*Philadelphia, Feb. 5th, 1779.*

SIR,

I should have done myself the honour of answering your letter yesterday, but was prevented by a variety of business. If I have violated any orders of the commander in chief, to him, and the Congress only, am I responsible; but certainly am not amendable to the tribunal of Mr. William Henry Drayton. I shall therefore remain entirely indifferent whether you are pleased to think or dream that I designedly threw myself into the hands of the enemy, or whether I was not taken by a concurrence of unfortunate circumstances, such as happen in the course of all wars. The only remark I shall make on your extraordinary requisition,



that I should clear myself on this point to you simply, Mr. William Henry Drayton, whom I consider but as a mere common member of Congress, is, that you pay a very ill compliment to the General. You must suppose him either miserably deficient in understanding, or in integrity as a servant of the public, when you suppose that he would suffer a man, for a single day, to act as his second in command, whom he knows to be guilty of such abominable military treason. This ingenious supposition, therefore, is, in my opinion, a greater affront to the General than to myself.

I am sincerely concerned that my friend Eustace should have degraded himself so far as to enter into any discussion of this matter with Mr. William Henry Drayton; and I shall reprimand him for not understanding his own dignity better. I shall now only take the trouble of adding, that if you can reconcile your conduct in stepping out of the road, (as I am informed you did in your charge to the grand jury), to aggravate the calamities of an unhappy man, who had sacrificed everything to the cause of your country, and, as he then conceived, to the rights of mankind; who had sacrificed an ample, at least an easy and independent fortune, the most honourable connections, great military pretensions, his friends and relations: I say, if you can reconcile your stepping out of the road to aggravate the calamities of man who had notoriously made these sacrifices, and who, at the very time you was displaying your generous eloquence, had no less than five centinels on his person, and was suffering extremely in body and mind—If you can, I repeat, reconcile such a procedure to common humanity, common sense, or common decency, you must still be a more singular personage than the public at present consider you.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient,

Humble Servant,

CHARLES LEE.

William Henry Drayton, Esq.

*Philadelphia, Feb. 8th, 1779.*

SIR,

At nine o'clock last night, I received yours of the fifth instant, in answer to mine of the third. But, as I have neither time or inclination to enter into a competition, whether Mr. Charles Lee, or Mr. William Henry Drayton, can raise the most ingenious supposition, say the keenest thing, and pen the most finished period with parenthesis; nor ambition to correspond with you in your simple character of Mr. Charles Lee, whom I cannot consider but as legally disgraced for being guilty of abominable military treason against a community of the most liberal, just, and generous, and, I must add, merciful people on the face of the globe: I say, perfectly satisfied with my simple character of Mr. William Henry Drayton, "a mere common member of Congress," and "a mere Chief Justice of South Carolina," I shall do myself the honour, out of breath as I am with parentheses, to make only one observation in reply, absolutely terminating the correspondence on my part. That I verily believe we equally remain entirely indifferent with respect to what either is "pleased to think or dream." And now, finally taking my leave of Mr. Charles Lee, with common decency from respect to my simple character,

I subscribe myself, Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

WM. HENRY DRAYTON.

Major Charles Lee.

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*Philadelphia, March 15th, 1779.*

SIR,

As I have now settled all my affairs, and as I am given to understand that you probably may soon set out for South Carolina, I take the liberty of addressing this letter to you which is to close our correspondence for ever. Until very lately, I was taught to consider

you only as a fantastic, pompous *dramatis persona*, a mere *malvolio*, never to be spoke or thought of but for the sake of laughter; and when the humour for laughter subsided, never to be spoke or thought of more. But I find I was mistaken; I find that you are as malignant a scoundrel, as you are universally allowed to be a ridiculous and disgusting coxcomb.

You are pleased to say, that I am legally disgraced; all that I shall say in reply, is, that I am able confidently to pronounce, that every man of rank in the whole army, every man on the Continent, who had read the proceedings of the Court Martial (perhaps, indeed, I might except Mr. Penn of North Carolina, and Dr. Scudder of the Jersies, with a few others about their size in understanding), is of the opinion that the stigma is not on him on whom the sentence was passed, but on those who passed this absurd, iniquitous, and preposterous sentence; for, to be just, I do not believe you quite blockhead enough to think the charge had a shadow of report; and if, by some wonderful metamorphosis, you should become an honest man, you will confess it. As to the confirmation of this curious sentence, I do not conceive myself at liberty to make any comments on it, as it is an affair of Congress, for which body I ever had, and ought to have a profound respect. I shall only lament that they are disgraced by so foul a member as Mr. William Henry Drayton. You tell me the Americans are the most merciful people on the face of the earth: I think so too; and the strongest instance of it is, that they did not long ago hang up you; and every advocate for the Stamp-act; and do not flatter yourself, that the present virtuous airs of patriotism you may give yourself, and your hard laboured letters to the Commissioners and the King, will ever wash away the stain. If you think the terms I make use of harsh or unmerited, my friend Major Edwards is commissioned to point out your remedy.

CHARLES LEE.

William Henry Drayton, Esq.

This correspondence, which produced nothing but inkshed, being finished, the General retired to his plantation in Berkley county, Virginia, where, still irritated with the scurrilous attacks he had met with from several writers and others in Philadelphia, he could not forbear giving vent to the bitterness of his feelings ; and in this misanthropic disposition, composed a set of queries, which he styled Political and Military. These he sent by one of his aids to the printers of Philadelphia, for publication ; but they thought it imprudent to admit them into their papers, as General Washington possessed the hearts and admiration of everyone : he therefore applied to the editor of the Maryland Journal, at Baltimore who indulged him with their insertion. The queries no sooner made their appearance, but a considerable disturbance took place among the citizens of Baltimore : the printer was called upon for the author, and obliged to give up his name. General Reed, then President of the State of Pennsylvania, conceiving himself to be injured, published the subsequent piece for his justification.

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The aspersions which have been thrown on my own character from the press, I have ever despised too much to take the least notice of them ; but when a most valuable and amiable character is attacked through me, I think it my duty to remark it and guard the public from error, even in opinion.

In a set of queries, designed to lessen the character of General Washington, in a late paper, I am alluded to so particularly as not to be mistaken, and quoted, as having furnished evidences under my own hand, that General Washington was not the distinguished character the addresses of the Council of this State had represented ; from which an inference is to be drawn prejudicial to the General in point of ability, and the Council in consistency, so far as I had any share in

those addresses. This insinuation I therefore think it my duty to contradict; and, though the sanctity of private and confidential correspondence has been grossly violated on this occasion, I should have passed it by, if the fact had not been as grossly misstated.

The only ground on which this insinuation can be made, arose from the following circumstance: In the fall, 1776, I was extremely anxious that Fort Washington should be evacuated; there was a difference in opinion among those whom the General consulted, and he hesitated more than I ever knew him on any other occasion, and more than I thought the public service admitted. Knowing that General Lee's opinion would be a great support to mine, I wrote to him from Hackinsack, stating the case, and my reasons, and, I think, urging him to join me in sentiment at the close of my letter; and, alluding to the particular subject then before me, to the best of my recollection, I added this sentence: "With a thousand good and great qualities, there is a want of decision to complete the perfect military character."

Upon this sentence, or one to this effect, wrote in haste, in full confidence, and in great anxiety for the event, is this ungenerous sentiment introduced into the world. The event but too fully justified my anxiety; for the fort was summoned that very day, and surrendered the next. I absolutely deny that there is any other ground but this letter; and if there is, let it be produced. I have now only to add, that though General Washington soon after, by an accident, knew of this circumstance, it never lessened the friendship which subsisted between us. He had too much greatness of mind to suppose himself incapable of mistakes, or to dislike a faithful friend, who should note an error with such circumstances of respect, and on such an occasion. I have since been with this great and good man, for such he is, at very critical moments; and I hope I shall not be suspected of unbecoming adulation, when I assure my countrymen, (so far as my opinion is thought

of any consequence) that they may repose themselves in perfect confidence on his prudence and judgment, which are equal to any circumstances;—and that repeated experience of the value of his opinions, have inspired him with more dependence on them than his modesty and diffidence would in some cases formerly admit. Time will shew, whether his enemies will not find themselves disappointed in their attempts to shake the public confidence, and lessen a character of so much worth, to gratify private, violent resentments.

JOSEPH REED.

*Philadelphia, July 14th, 1779.*

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To judge of the propriety of General Reed's performance, it will be necessary to refer the reader to his letter dated Nov. 21, 1776, which is a true copy from the original, in his own hand writing.

Lee remained at his retreat, living in a style peculiar to himself, in a house more like a barn than a palace. Glass windows and plaistering would have been luxurious extravagance, and his furniture consisted of a very few necessary articles; indeed he was now so rusticated, that he could have lived in a tub with Diogenes: however he had got a few select valuable authors, and these enabled him to pass away his time in this obscurity. In the fall, 1782, he began to be weary with the sameness of his situation; and experiencing his unfitness for the management of country business, he came to a determination to sell his estate, and procure a little settlement near some sea-port town, where he might learn what the world was doing, and enjoy the conversation of mankind.

His farm, though an excellent tract of land, rather brought him in debt at the end of the year, and added to the difficulties he laboured under. It is no wonder, then, he was inclined to relinquish his present system of life. He left Berkley, and came to Baltimore, where

he staid near a week with some old friends, and then took his leave for Philadelphia.

It is presumed he now found a difference between a *General in command*, and *one* destitute of every thing but the name; for we do not find him entertained at the house of any private citizen. He took lodgings at an inn the sign of the Convestigoe waggon, in Market-street. After being three or four days in the city, he was taken with a shivering, the forerunner of a fever, which put a period to his existence, October 2d, 1782.

A friend of the Editor's was at the inn when he took his departure from this world. The servants informed him that General Lee was dying; upon which he went into the room; he was then struggling with the king of terrors, and seemed to have lost his senses; the last words he heard him speak were, "Stand by me, my brave grenadiers!"

The citizens of Philadelphia, calling to remembrance his former services, appeared to be much affected at his death. His funeral was attended with a very large concourse of people, the clergy of different denominations, his excellency the president of Congress, the president, and some members of the council of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania, his excellency the minister plenipotentiary of France, M. Marbois secretary to the embassy, the minister of finance, General baron de Vominil, duke de Lauzun, the minister of war, and several other officers of distinction both in the French and American army.

From what hath been observed in these memoirs, we may with justice affirm, that General Lee was a great and sincere friend to the rights and liberties of mankind, and that it was this grand principle which led him to take part on the side of America. It appears, that, from his youth, he was bred up with the highest regard for the noble sentiments of freedom; his education and reading strengthened them; the historians and orators of Greece and Rome, with whom he was considerably conversant, added to the sacred flame;



and his travels in many parts of the world did not tend to diminish it.

When a boy he was sent to an academy in Switzerland, and he has frequently said to his friends, that he was there struck with the general happiness, affluence and ease diffused throughout that country, notwithstanding its natural disadvantages of soil and climate. In one of his letters, he expresses himself in this manner: "When I was quite young in Switzerland, I could not help comparing the robust well clothed commonalty of this country, with their miserable neighbours of France, a spot upon which Nature seems to have taken pains to confer her favours. To France, Nature has given the most fruitful soil, which produceth not only every necessary but every luxury of life. She has given to its people a lively, active, enterprising genius, a climate upon the whole the best of the world—To the Swiss, she bequeathed rocks, mountains, and, as it is thought, very inferior mental faculties; and yet the Swiss are rich, happy and respectable; the French, starving and contemptible. In Italy, the contrast betwixt the free, and those who are not free, is still more remarkable; I know very well, that the republics of Genoa and Venice are not in general allowed to be free states. Monsieur Montesquieu has demonstrated that they are not free; but there is undoubtedly some excellence in them, which has escaped this wise man—shall I beg leave to hazard a conjecture? They have no king: They have no court."

The general had read both men and books; his reading and travels were extensive, and of course his manners easy and free of embarrassment; so that he was frequently accustomed to deliver his sentiments and feelings without disguise, from the first impressions, according to the nature of the objects which presented.

This liberality of conduct, and openness of disposition, in a young country, caused many to doubt of his belief in revealed religion; the common people, at last considered him as an atheist; while those of a higher



class were more indulgent to his principles. If we were to form a judgment on this subject, from his private correspondence, we should not accuse him as totally destitute of religious notions, for it appears that he entertained some grand and sublime ideas of the Supreme Being, and was strongly persuaded that no society could exist without religion.

He has often asserted, that he thought the Christian religion, unincumbered of its sophistications, the most excellent, as comprehending the most divine system of ethics, consequently of a divine nature ; but at the same time he disapproved of the length and tediousness of the liturgies of the various sects. As to the dogmas, he considered many of them absurd, if not impious, and derogatory to the honour, dignity and wisdom of the Godhead, or omniscient ruler and moderator of the infinity of worlds that surround us.

The General, in his person, was of a genteel make, and rather above the middle size ; his remarkable aquiline nose rendered his face somewhat disagreeable. He was master of a most genteel address ; but, in the latter part of his life, became excessively negligent of the graces, both in garb and behaviour. A talent for repartee, united with a quickness of penetration, created him many enemies. A character so eccentric and singular, could not fail of attracting the popular attention. His *small friends* frequently passed severe criticisms on his words and actions. Narrowly watched, every little slip or failure was noticed, and represented to his disadvantage. The objections to his moral conduct were numerous, and his great fondness for dogs brought on him the dislike and frowns of the fair sex : for the General would permit his canine adherents to follow him to the parlour, the bed-room, and sometimes they might be seen on a chair next his elbow at table.

As the ladies are commonly against any transgressions of the laws of decency and cleanliness, it is no wonder a shyness commenced between them and the General. This hath given some persons an idea of his being averse

to women, which in reality was not the case; for his life and posthumous papers will furnish several examples of his early attachment to them; and a letter to him, from a British officer in Montreal, in 1774, convinces the Editor of his having been susceptible of the same feelings with other men, and of his having frequently indulged himself in gallantry with the ladies. "During the winter," says this officer, who was the General's intimate friend, "I took a trip to Quebec, where I passed several agreeable days with *your queen*. I delivered your compliments to her, and she enquired particularly about you, desiring me to return them most sincerely whenever I wrote—She is the same amiable creature, whose disposition neither climate nor country can alter, and as strongly attached to you as ever." And his letter from Warsaw to Louisa, demonstrates the same fact.

There is great probability the General was the first person who suggested the idea that America ought to declare herself independent. When he was sent by the commander in chief to New-York, he behaved with such activity and spirit, infusing the same into the minds of his troops and the people, that Mr. John Adams said, "a happier expedition never was projected; and that the whole Whig world were blessing him for it." About this time Doctor Franklin gave Mr. Thomas Paine, the celebrated author of *Common Sense*, an introductory letter to him, in which were these words: "The bearer, Mr. Paine, has requested a line of introduction to you, which I give the more willingly, as I know his sentiments are not very different from yours." A few days after, the Doctor writes again, "There is a kind of suspense in men's minds here at present, waiting to see what terms will be offered from England—I expect none that we can accept; and when that is generally seen, we shall be more unanimous and more decisive. Then your proposed solemn league and covenant will go better down, and perhaps most of *your other strong measures* adopted." In a letter to Edward Rutlege,

Esq. in the spring of 1776, then a member of the Continental Congress, the General thus expresses himself. "As your affairs prosper, the timidity of the senatorial part of the continent, great and small, grows and extends itself. By the Eternal G—d, unless you *declare yourselves independent*, establish a more certain and fixed legislature than that of a temporary courtesy of the people, you richly deserve to be enslaved, and I think far from impossible that it should be your lot; as, without a more systematic intercourse with France and Holland, we cannot, we have not the means of carrying on the war." There are other epistles of his, of a similar spirit and diction.

The more we investigate the General's character and conduct, the more conspicuous his services will appear. In the infancy of the American dispute, we all find him continually suggesting and forwarding plans for the defence of the country; and though he was a professed enemy to a standing army, he was always recommending a well regulated militia. This he considered as the natural strength of a country; and absolutely necessary for its safety and preservation.

He has frequently asserted, that a more pernicious idea could not enter into the heads of the citizens, than that rigid discipline, and a strict subjection to military rules, were incompatible with civil liberty; and he was of opinion, that when the bulk of a community would not submit to the ordinances necessary for the preservation of military discipline, their liberty could not be of long continuance.

The liberty of every commonwealth must be protected ultimately by military force. Military force depends upon order and discipline: without order and discipline, the greatest number of armed men are only a contemptible mob; a handful of regulars must disperse them. It follows then, that the citizens at large must submit to the means of becoming soldiers, or that they must commit the protection of their lives and property to a distinct body of men, who will naturally, in a short

time, set up a professional interest, separate from the community at large. To this cause we may attribute the subversion of every free State that history presents to us. The Romans were certainly the first and most glorious people that have figured on the face of the globe; they continued free longest. Every citizen was a soldier, and a soldier not in name, but in fact; by which is meant, that they were the most rigid observers of military institutions. The General therefore thought it expedient that every State in America should be extremely careful to perfect the laws relative to their militia; and that, where they were glaringly defective, they should be made more efficient; and that it should be established as a point of honour, and the criterion of a virtuous citizen, to pay the greatest deference to the common necessary laws of a camp.

The most difficult task the Editor met with in collecting and arranging these Posthumous Papers, arose from his desire of not giving offence to such characters as had been the object of the General's aversion and resentment. Unhappily his disappointments had soured his temper; the affair of Monmouth, several pieces of scurrility from the press, and numerous instances of private slander and defamation, so far got the better of his philosophy, as to provoke him in the highest degree, and he became, as it were, angry with all mankind.

To this exasperated disposition we may impute the origin of his political queries, and a number of satirical hints thrown out both in his conversation and writing, against the Commander in Chief. Humanity will draw a veil over the involuntary errors of sensibility, and pardon the sallies of a suffering mind, as its presages did not meet with an accomplishment. General Washington, by his retirement, demonstrated to the world, that power was not his object; that America had nothing to fear from his ambition; but that she was honoured with a specimen of such exalted patriotism as could not fail to attract the attention and admiration of the most distant nations.

The reader will not wonder that General Lee, disappointed in his career of glory, should be continually inculcating an idea of the extreme danger of trusting too much to the wisdom of *one*, for the safety of the *whole*; that he should consider it as repugnant to the principles of freedom and republicanism, to continue for years, one man as commander in chief; that there should be a rotation of office, military as well as civil; and though the commander of an army possessed all the virtues of Cato, and the talents of Julius Cæsar, it could not alter the nature of the thing; since by habituating the people to look up to one man, all true republican spirit became enervated, and a visible propensity to monarchical government was created and fostered; that there was a charm in the long possession of high office, and in the pomp and influence that attended it, which might corrupt the best dispositions.

Indeed it was the opinion of Marcus Aurelius, whose virtues not only honoured the throne, but human nature, that to have the power of doing much, and to confine that power to doing good, was a prodigy in nature. Such sentiments of this divine prince, who was not only trained up in the schools of austere philosophy, but whose elevated situation rendered him the most able judge of the difficulty there is in not abusing extensive power, when we have it in our hands, furnish substantial arguments for not entrusting it to any mortal whatsoever. But while we are convinced of the justness of these sentiments, we are led the more to respect and reverence our most disinterested Commander in Chief, who stands conspicuous, with unrivalled glory, superior to the fascinations which have overthrown many a great and noble mind.

The Editor conceives his present labours, in the compilation of this work, will be useful, and throw some light on the history of the late revolution—a monument of the arduous struggle, exhibiting a faithful and valuable collection of military and political correspondence.

EDWARD LANGWORTHY.

*Baltimore, March 10th, 1787.*



III.

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MEMOIR

OF

CHARLES LEE,

MAJOR-GENERAL IN THE SERVICE OF THE U. S. OF AMERICA.

BY

SIR HENRY BUNBURY, BART.

Reprinted from the Life and Correspondence of Sir Thomas Hanmer. London, 1838.





# MEMOIR

OF

CHARLES LEE,

MAJOR-GENERAL IN THE SERVICE OF THE U. S. OF AMERICA.

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Charles Lee was the youngest son of General John Lee, of Dernhall, in Cheshire; his mother was Isabella, the second daughter of Sir Henry Bunbury, Bart., of Stanney, in the same county.

The subject of this memoir was born in 1731, and he is said to have received a commission in the army at eleven years of age. However, whether it was through the management of his parents, or his own disposition, Lee's education did not suffer from this premature entrance into the business of manhood; he was a fair classical scholar, and he acquired, early in life, a knowledge of the Italian, Spanish, French, and German languages. Nature had made him an enthusiast, and whatever was the object of his pursuit, he followed it with an extreme ardour. But nature seems likewise to have given him a restless mind, and a hot and imperious temper. Eager, disputatious, acute, jealous of honour, brave to an excess, and possessing talents far above the common order, he appeared a man likely to hew out for himself a path of glory, or to perish prematurely in a duel. In person he was tall and extremely thin; his face ugly, with an aquiline nose of enormous proportion; his manners were high-bred and impressive, though he was singular, and in his latter days slovenly, in his habits. He was a fast friend, but a bitter enemy.

When he joined his regiment, he applied himself with all the energy of his character to the study of his profession; and he seems (poor as he then was) to have pushed his way well in the service, for we find him, at the age of twenty-six, a Captain of Grenadiers in the unfortunate action at Ticonderoga, where he was shot through the body. Promotion followed rapidly; and having returned to England, he published a pamphlet on the importance of our retaining Canada, which drew forth the commendations of Franklin.

When General Burgoyne was sent to Portugal in 1762, Lee accompanied him with the rank of Colonel. The General had a just estimation of his friend's military talents, and in the October of that year he confided to him the command of a corps destined to surprise the Spanish camp near Villa Velha. This service was performed in the most brilliant manner; the enemy's troops were dispersed with a heavy loss, and their artillery and a great number of prisoners taken. At the termination of the war, Lee returned again to England, high in professional reputation, and strongly recommended to the special favour of Government by the Court of Lisbon and by Count La Lippe.

His prospects were now brilliant, particularly as he was intimate with men of high rank and influence in London, and appeared to enjoy the friendship of one of the cabinet ministers. But Lee was a man not to be turned from his opinions by any considerations of his personal interest; he would not even keep silence on matters in which his feelings were interested, though the subject was no concern of his own. A war broke out between the confederated tribes of Indians and our American colonists; the ministers of the day did not coincide with the views which the latter party took of the contest; Charles Lee wrote and published again on behalf of his friends in America, and he lost forever the favour of the British Government.

It was about this time that the dissensions in Poland had arisen to such a height as to make it probable that

a struggle for its ancient independence must be undertaken by that unhappy nation. To that field, as one in which he could draw his sword in the cause of liberty, Lee turned his eyes. His own position in England is best explained by the following extract from a letter addressed to his cousin, Sir Charles Bunbury, dated Dec. 7, 1764. "Some business has unfortunately fallen out which prevents my having the happiness of visiting you as I purposed before I left England. I intended to have been down with you to-morrow, but my business cannot be finished before Monday, and it is absolutely necessary that I should be ready for the packet at Harwich on Wednesday morning. You must therefore, in the vulgar language, take the will for the deed. My present scheme is this, to go into the Polish service, to which I am so strongly recommended that I can scarcely fail. What can I do better? I see no chance of being provided for at home; my income is miserably scanty; my inclinations greater than those who are ignorant of my circumstances suppose. It is wretchedness itself not to be able to herd with the class of men we have been accustomed to from our infancy; it is dishonest to strain above our faculties, and it is mortifying to avail ourselves of shifts which I have found necessary. My resolutions are therefore to live in any part of the world where I can find respectable employment, at least till my mother's death."\*

On his arrival in Poland he obtained the rank of Major-General, and was attached to the person of the King as one of his aides-de-camp. It is evident that Lee conceived a strong affection to the unfortunate Poniatowski, though he bore the title of King. In a letter to his friend, the elder Colman, dated Warsaw, May 1st, 1767, he says, "The situation of the King is really to be lamented; notwithstanding he wears a

\* It must be observed, that when Lee speaks here of his means as being miserably scanty, both his elder brothers were dead without leaving children, and it appears that when he engaged himself and his fortunes in the cause of America, ten years afterwards, he enjoyed an income of nearly £1,000. a year, besides having large grants of lands in the colonies.

crown he is an honest, virtuous man, and a friend to the rights of mankind. I wish we could persuade a prince of my acquaintance, who is taught (as far as he can be taught anything) to hate them, to exchange with him. I know a nation that would spare a whole family, mother and all, to the Poles, and only take in exchange this one man." In the same letter Lee gives a frightful account of the state of the Polish provinces; and, in spite of his republican principles, he seems to have considered the confederates at that period to have been as detestable as the Russians themselves. He had been anxious to witness the campaign between the Turks and the Russians, "though," says he, "I believe it will be a ridiculous one; if not like that of Harlequin and Scapin, it will resemble the battle of Wilkes and Talbot. The Russians can gain nothing by beating their enemies, and the Turks are confoundedly afraid. I have been in this place two months, waiting to join the Russian army, and I am afraid I shall be obliged to wait a month longer. The communications are so filled with the offals of the confederates, who are themselves a banditti, that it is impossible to stir ten yards without an escort of Russians. The English are less secure than others, as they are esteemed the arch-enemies of the holy faith. A French comedian was the other day near being hanged from the circumstance of his wearing a *bob-wig*, which by the confederates is supposed to be the uniform of the English nation. I wish to God the three branches of our legislature would take it into their heads to travel through the woods of Poland in bob-wigs." Again, "I see that the country is in one state of confusion, filled with devastation and murder. I hear every day of the Russians beating the confederates, but as to what the Russians, what the confederates, what the body of the nation propose, I am utterly ignorant, though no more, I believe, than they are themselves. Their method of carrying on the war is equally gentle with what ours was in North America: the confederates hang up all the Russians who fall

into their hands, and the Russians put to the sword the confederates." General Lee succeeded at length in his desire to join the Russian camp on the frontiers of Turkey; and he was present when the Czarina's army was forced to raise the siege of Chotzim.

But in the preceding winter Lee had visited England, carrying with him the strongest recommendations to Government from the King of Poland, to whom he addressed a long letter on the 1st of December, 1766, conveying his views of the state of parties in London, and the characters of the leaders, and dwelling particularly on the condition of Lord Chatham, whom he describes as quite broken in mind, and childishly fond of his recent earldom.\*

The friendship and solicitations of Poniatowski failed to obtain from the English minister any favour towards Lee: and he soon returned to the Continent. About this time a letter was addressed to him by his friend Mr. Wroughton, (who was, I believe, acting as the *Chargé d'Affaires* of the British Government at Warsaw), from which I give the following extract, as it serves to mark the conduct of the man whose character I am endeavouring to trace.

"I should have been heartily glad to have heard, my dear Colonel, that His Majesty's recommendation had been more successful in procuring you an establishment equal to your merit and wishes; but am not at all surprised that you find the door shut against you by the person who has such unbounded credit, as you have ever too freely indulged a liberty of declaiming, which many infamous and invidious people have not failed to inform him of. The principle on which you openly speak your mind, is honest and patriotick, but not politick; and

\* There is another letter from Lee dated on the 25th Dec., to Prince . . . treating further and more particularly of English politicks. Amongst other things, he says, "An Irishman, one Mr. Burke, is sprung up in the House of Commons, who has astonished everybody with the power of his eloquence, his comprehensive knowledge in all our exterior and internal politicks and commercial interests. He wants nothing but that sort of dignity annexed to rank and property in England, to make him the most considerable man in the Lower House."

as it will not succeed in changing men or times,\* common prudence should teach us to hold our tongues, rather than to risque our own fortunes without any prospect of advantage to ourselves or neighbours. Excuse this scrap of advice, my dear Colonel, and place it to the vent of a heart entirely devoted to your interest."

It is difficult to name the country, or hit upon the spot, where Lee was to be found at any given time between his quitting the Polish service and his engaging himself in the cause of American Independence. The letters of his acquaintance in England were hunting after him on the Continent, while those of his foreign friends were taking the chance of finding him in London. He roved over Europe with the speed and irregularity of a meteor: †

He was a second edition of Lord Peterborough—

"In journeys he outrides the post,  
Sits up 'till midnight with his host,  
Talks politicks and gives the toast.

"Knows every prince in Europe's face,  
Flies like a squib from place to place,  
And travels not, but runs a race.

"A skeleton in outward figure,  
His meagre corpse, though full of vigour,  
Would halt behind him were it bigger.

"So wonderful his expedition,  
When you have not the least suspicion,  
He's with you like an apparition."

\* If Lee was, as Dr. Girdleston has written to prove, and other people have believed, the author of Junius's Letters, the effects of his declamations were greater than Mr. Wroughton's philosophy dreamt of.

† In one of these courses through Italy, Lee was involved in a duel with a foreign officer, whom he slew, but he was himself wounded, and lost the use of two of his fingers.



However it seems pretty clear that Lee's head-quarters were generally in London during the ferment promoted by the writings of Junius; but as the symptoms of open warfare between England and her American colonies grew more decided, he took his final resolution, and he quitted England for ever in the summer of 1773. Having formerly served a long time with the provincial troops, and having kept up an intimate correspondence with many friends who were now taking a forward part in the struggle for American liberty, Lee found himself at once at home, and he devoted all the energies of his mind and body to their cause. For two years he was hurrying indefatigably from the north to the south and from the south to the north, visiting the towns and the back settlements, exhorting, encouraging, and spreading the fire which burnt so fiercely in his meagre frame. At length came the fatal moment of actual hostilities; and Colonel Lee (though he had been distant from the scene, nor was at all implicated in the fight with the King's Troops at Lexington) wrote immediately to the Secretary at War, resigning his half-pay in the British service, assuring him at the same time "that whenever it should please his Majesty to call him forth to any honourable service against the natural enemies of his country, or in defence of his just rights and dignity, no man would obey the righteous summons with more zeal and alacrity than himself."

The sword was now drawn, though the Americans in general were not yet inclined to throw away the scabbard. However, they resolved to oppose force by force, and they took measures immediately to form an army. They chose Washington to be their Commander-in-Chief, and elected four Major-Generals, Ward, Lee, Schuyler, and Putnam, to serve under him. This order of appointment gave some umbrage to the fiery Englishman, who piqued himself on his military talents: he was placed below Mr. Ward; and he describes this second in command of the New England forces, as being "a fat old gentleman, who had been a popular *church-*

*warden*, but had no acquaintance whatever with military affairs." \*

During the long and arduous blockade of the English army in Boston, Lee commanded one of the divisions of the revolutionary army, and he confirmed, by his zeal and energy, the confidence which the Americans had been inclined to repose in him. There is no period of that unhappy war to which an English officer, who feels (abstractedly from the political questions) for the honour of his country and the credit of his profession, can look back with less of satisfaction, than to this disgraceful blockade of General Howe's corps, by the unorganized and half-armed levies of the New England insurgents. This, however, is not a proper occasion for entering into details, and exposing the wretched imbecility of our chief commanders, from the Battle of Bunker's Hill to the evacuation of Boston.

Before General Howe embarked his troops and quitted this first scene of his disgrace, Lee was despatched to levy men in Connecticut, and secure New York, where the friends of Great Britain were very strong, and where the arrival of English troops was eagerly desired. He collected about twelve hundred volunteers and militiamen with great celerity, and marched rapidly to his destination. The Council of New York took alarm, fearing that the effect of his arrival would be to make their district the seat of war. They wrote to Lee, urging him to halt; but he hesitated not one instant: he pressed forward, entered the town, roused the revolutionary party to exertion, disarmed their opponents, collected ammunition, threw up batteries, and brought New York into such a state, that the hopes of its being seized by Sir Henry Clinton's corps were completely defeated.

At this time, the failure of Montgomery's expedition against Quebec, and the death of that Commander,

\* This poor man was not long in discovering his own incapacity, and he resigned his commission as soon as the British troops evacuated Boston, thus leaving Lee second in command of the American army.

created a great alarm in the New England states, and while they proposed to increase very largely the force of their army in Canada, they desired that General Lee should be appointed to this important command. He was on the eve of setting out for Lake Champlain, when intelligence was received of Sir H. Clinton's expedition against the southern coasts. This danger appeared to be more imminent than the former; and Lee was hurried off to rouse the volunteers and assemble the militias of Virginia and the Carolinas. Such was his expedition, that when the British fleet and army came into Hampton Roads, they found General Lee already there, assembling forces from every side and preparing to oppose their landing: they drew off and proceeded farther to the south; but on the shores of North Carolina they were again faced by this indefatigable commander: and when Sir Henry Clinton determined finally on attacking Charleston, and landed his troops in the beginning of June 1776 on the neighbouring islands, he found his eternal adversary intrenched in a strong position on the main-land, with an advanced corps in a fort on Sullivan's Island, armed with a great number of heavy cannon. The English squadron endeavoured to reduce this fort, but their fire was overpowered by that of the Americans; one of our ships was sunk, and the rest were forced to retire with a heavy loss of men. Lee maintained his communication with the fort; and Clinton, feeling that his hopes of success were baffled, re-embarked his troops, and returned to join the main army under General Howe, which was preparing to attack the American forces on Long Island. On the other hand Lee posted into Georgia, called forth and organized the military means of that province, and then flew back to resume his station under Washington.

He found the American commander and his army in a situation of extreme difficulty. They had been driven out of their positions on Long Island with heavy loss and though the inertness of the British commanders

had allowed Washington to escape with the bulk of his troops to the mainland, the Americans were so disheartened and disorganized that they dared not for the moment face the British in the field. General Howe crossed the Channel, and obtained possession of New York, while Washington collected all that remained of his army in a strong position on a peninsula near Kingsbridge. The great man who commanded the American forces seems to have been at this time in an almost desperate state of mind: his army had been defeated and almost routed; besides his great losses in the field, he had seen a large proportion of the militia disperse and return to their homes; the first ardor of the provinces had cooled down under protracted and unsuccessful warfare, and the measures of Congress were slow and feeble. What remained of his troops were miserably deficient as to their equipment and supplies, broken in spirit, and beginning to cabal. Near at hand were the British forces, vastly superior in numbers as well as in discipline, flushed with recent victory, masters of the sea, and abundantly provided with artillery and stores.

It was in this critical situation that Lee, returning without troops from the southward, found the American army. He took a rapid view of the position, and his falcon eye at once detected the great danger to which they were exposed. The ground, indeed, was extremely strong in itself, and Washington was anxious to fight his battle there, to re-establish the affairs of the young republic by victory, or to die on that field in a glorious struggle for the independence of his country. On the very day after Lee's arrival, the British army commenced its movements toward the American camp, and Washington, assembling a council of war, disclosed his plans, and invited the concurrence of his general officers. But to these proposals Lee offered an anxious opposition: he urged that there was no ground to hope that General Howe would come to assail them in their entrenchments on the peninsula; that the game for the

British army was to move higher up and seize and fortify the isthmus by which alone the American camp held communication with the continent; and thus, while their ships were completely masters of the sea on either hand, they would compel the troops of the United States to lay down their arms without striking a blow, as soon as their scanty stock of provisions should be consumed. These arguments carried conviction; a large majority of the council voted against General Washington, and he was forced to concede.

The resolution to retreat being taken, there was no time to be lost; the camp broke up immediately, and the commander-in-chief crossed the isthmus, and marched toward White Plains, leaving General Lee with the rear division, to collect the means of saving as much of the baggage and artillery as might be practicable. The English army, having moved too slowly to prevent the escape of Washington, followed his march toward White Plains. They were greatly superior in numbers as well as in composition, yet there ensued nothing more than manœuvres and skirmishes, attended only by the effect of restoring, in some degree, the courage and confidence of the Americans. General Howe seems to have taken no measures whatever to intercept Lee, who was detained some days, in spite of all his activity, by the difficulty of drawing together the animals and carriages necessary for the removal of the cannon and heavy baggage. Having at last collected these means, he set forward with his convoy, contriving to conceal his movements, and avoiding the positions of the British army. Lee accomplished the arduous task which had been allotted to him with extraordinary skill and celerity; he rejoined the divisions under Washington, bringing up the artillery and baggage without loss, and he enjoyed the satisfaction of knowing that his march was reputed, by both friends and foes, as one of the ablest performances of the war.

General Howe made a faint attempt to bring the reunited army of his antagonists to battle in their new po-

sition at White Plains, but they withdrew without difficulty ; and the British commander, feeling conscious that the Americans had now escaped from his grasp, found it expedient to give a new direction to his operations. Returning towards New York, he attacked and carried, with a vigour which was far from usual in him, the important forts by which the enemy commanded the lower passages of the Hudson, and he invaded the Jerseys with the principal part of his army. This movement induced Washington to march with the main body of his forces to the Delaware, leaving Lee with three or four thousand men to watch the neighbourhood of New York.

As the British advanced into Jersey, they found few of the enemy's troops to attempt resistance : the people of the province were disgusted with the war, nor could they be induced to turn out as militia, till the misconduct and licentiousness of the royal soldiers roused them some time after to take up arms. The English squadrons rode undisputed masters of the estuaries as well as of the open sea, and Washington arrived on the Delaware only to feel that his means were utterly incapable of arresting the onward course of the British. He despatched instructions to Lee to join the main army with the troops under his command, hoping to defend the passage of the river, at least until it should be completely frozen, and thus gain time for reviving the spirit of resistance, and gathering the provincial forces for the protection of Philadelphia.

The partisans of General Washington have accused Lee of exhibiting on this occasion a tardiness and reluctance to obey the orders of the commander-in-chief ; they have charged him of entertaining projects of his own, tending to prolong his separate command, and to thwart the plans of his superior officer. However this may have been, the orders to form a junction were repeated with a pressing haste, and Lee set forward on his march to the southward. On the 6th of December, 1776, he crossed the North River with about 3,000



men and some pieces of cannon. He took his route through Morris county ; but, possessing very imperfect information as to the positions and circumstances of his foes, as well as of his friends, Lee felt that great vigilance was necessary ; and in his anxiety to procure intelligence, he went out in person with a small reconnoitring party. On his return towards his camp, he halted for refreshment at a farm-house, and he was there surprised by Colonel Harcourt,\* who had penetrated through the country, with a part of the 16th light dragoons, for the purpose of watching the march of the American division. So dexterously did Harcourt avail himself of information, which he obtained on his route, that he pounced on General Lee and his men, unprepared and unsuspecting, and bore them away to the British quarters.

There appeared at first a disposition to consider the republican commander as a deserter from the royal service. Lee was placed in close confinement, and treated with much severity. This led to retaliation on the part of the Americans, who threw Colonel Campbell and other British officers into prison, and held them as hostages for the safety of their general. But it was not till after the surrender of Burgoyne's army in October, 1777, that Lee was admitted to his parole as a prisoner of war ; a few months afterwards he was exchanged, and he returned to his former post as second in command of the American army.

During Lee's captivity the face of the war had been completely changed, and events of the greatest importance had occurred. On the one hand, the British army, under Sir William Howe, had defeated that of Washington, and taken possession of Philadelphia, a city regarded as the capital of the United States, and, until its capture, the seat of Congress. The people of the country, suffering from a protracted warfare, had become, in many districts, disaffected to the republican cause ; and even in the army there had appeared a dan-

\* The late Earl Harcourt.



gerous spirit of dissension. Worn out by privations of every kind, the sickly soldiers could hardly be kept together, while many of the officers of rank entered into cabals, directed particularly against the authority of Washington as commander-in-chief. On the other hand, the royal army in the north, under the command of General Burgoyne, had been compelled to lay down its arms. The Americans were relieved from every serious apprehension of danger on the side of Canada; and the most important of all objects for the insurgent colonies had been attained by the ratification of a treaty of alliance between their republic and the court of France.

When Lee rejoined the American army in the neighbourhood of Philadelphia, the British commander was preparing for the evacuation of that city. It was known that a strong French fleet, with some thousands of troops, might be expected to arrive very soon upon the coast; and that the English squadron, under Lord Howe, was too weak to oppose them with any chance of success. There appeared therefore an imminent risk, that if the British lingered at Philadelphia, they would be hemmed in by superior forces, both by sea and land, and their retreat upon New York would be rendered impracticable.

Just before this time the command of the royal army had devolved on Sir Henry Clinton, in consequence of Sir William Howe's having resigned the station which he had filled during two years, to the prejudice of the royal cause and of the service in which he held so high a rank. Yet Howe was popular with his army; his manners were prepossessing, and his personal courage was conspicuous in the field: but his views were narrow—his nature indolent and careless—and he seemed never to feel the extent and importance of his duties, as the person to whom the mighty interests of his king and country were entrusted in the conduct of the war.

Sir Henry Clinton was an officer of ability and energy, but he succeeded to the command when it was

too late to repair the evils resulting from the negligence of his predecessor. A new and formidable enemy was entering the field; the spirit and confidence of the Americans were revived; and a large proportion of their northern troops, who had learned to fight hard and to conquer in the campaign against Burgoyne, were now joining the army under Washington. The American commander himself was so much elated by this sudden change of circumstances that he seemed to have indulged a sanguine hope of preventing the British from retiring across the Delaware, and of reducing them to the necessity of laying down their arms. But Clinton took his measures with sagacity and promptitude. On the 18th of June, 1778, he evacuated Philadelphia, and crossed the river with all his baggage and stores, without confusion or loss, though the American troops were close to him on every side.

The line of country through which the British had to pass, in retreating towards New York, was strong and intricate; and it was necessary to wind in some places through narrow defiles, which must retard the march of troops encumbered with an enormous quantity of baggage, and expose them to be attacked at disadvantage. Washington pressed on their flank and rear, and he was eager to force the English to a general action. In this desire, however, he was not supported by the opinion of his principal officers. A majority of his council of war concurred with Lee in judging it imprudent and perilous to venture, with nearly equal numbers, to encounter the flower of the British army in a pitched battle; and they advised that their operations should be confined to the hanging closely on the retreating foe, and the seizing every partial advantage which might present itself. Thus thwarted in his opinions and wishes, the American commander reluctantly and angrily submitted; but still, adhering to his own views, he determined to make his advanced detachments so large, and to keep his main body so near at hand, that what might begin as partial actions with the enemy's rear,

might gradually become more serious, and bring on the general engagement which he desired. In pursuance of this object, as the British retired slowly through the Jerseys, Washington reinforced the corps which dogged their march to such an extent, that nearly one-half of his army was in advance, and liable to be engaged with the enemy. Under these circumstances, Lee felt it due to his rank and character to claim the command of this large portion of the troops; and his claim was allowed, though it is clear that he and his superior were already on very bad terms. The English republican had always been jealous of the dangerous extent and continuance of the power entrusted to Washington, nor does he seem to have entertained any high respect for his military talents. On the other hand, the American commander probably regarded Lee as a *frondeur*, and was galled by his successful opposition on two important occasions. His rank, however, and his acknowledged abilities, rendered it unadvisable to refuse to Lee the post which he now demanded; and he immediately assumed the command of four or five thousand men, who were at this time close around the rear of the British columns.

It is not compatible with the limits of this memoir to enter into the detail of the battle of Monmouth. In withdrawing promptly across the passes in his rear, when attacked by the main strength of the English army, Lee followed out the principle which he had maintained in council. His conduct was highly applauded by the British officers; and even those Americans who were the most zealous for the reputation of Washington, hesitated to censure the judgment of Lee in retiring on the main body, while they admitted that he displayed much skill in a nice and difficult operation. But he had once more thwarted the designs, though he does not seem to have disobeyed any explicit orders, of his superior officer. The two generals met on the field, and the long-suppressed anger of Washington burst forth in language so violent as to induce General Lee,

as soon as the action was over, to address a letter to his commander, in consequence of which he was placed under arrest, and arraigned before a court-martial on three charges :—1st, for disobedience of orders ; 2dly, for misbehavior before the enemy ; and, 3dly, for disrespect to the commander-in-chief. On these charges Lee was pronounced guilty by the Court, and was sentenced to be suspended from holding any commission in the armies of the United States for the term of twelve months. In his defence the general displayed great eloquence and ability ; and after his sentence had been confirmed by Congress, he published a vindication of his conduct, to which he annexed so severe a review of Washington's military proceedings through the war, as to produce a challenge from Colonel Laurens, one of the commander-in-chief's aides-de-camp, who wounded Lee in the side.

But before a confirmation of the sentence pronounced by the court-martial could be obtained from Congress, this assembly had discussed and disputed over the question during several evenings. There were strong and angry differences of opinion ; and great heats arose in society, in the midst of which Lee remained several months in Philadelphia, battling out his cause with the wonted fire and tenacity of his character. But, in the summer of 1779, he retired to his estate in Berkeley county in Virginia, where he lived about three years, "in a style (says the American gentleman who published his papers) peculiar to himself, in a house more like a barn than a palace. Glass windows and plastering would have been luxurious extravagance ; and his furniture consisted of a very few necessary articles : indeed he was now so rusticated, that he could have lived in a tub with Diogenes. However, he had got a few select valuable authors, and these enabled him to pass away his time in this obscurity."

The ex-general bred horses and dogs, of which animals he was extravagantly fond ; but he had no turn for farming ; at the end of three years Lee grew sick

of utter solitude, and he moved back to the coast with the intention of settling, for the rest of his days, within reach of society and information. Death, however, surprised him a few days after his arrival at Philadelphia; and the last words he was heard to utter, in the delirium of fever, were, "Stand by me, my brave grenadiers!"

Charles Lee died on the 2d of October, 1782, in the 52d year of his age. The distinguished honours which were rendered to his funeral, not only by the attendance of great bodies of the people, but by the presidents and members both of Congress and of the provincial assembly—by the foreign ministers, and the civil and military officers—are the more remarkable, when we remember that he had been regarded latterly as the personal enemy of George Washington, who now enjoyed the highest place in reputation and authority; and that Lee had been driven from his station, and blighted in his prospects, by what many people considered as the jealousy and injustice of that distinguished patriot.

I do not propose to try the patience of my readers by making long extracts from what remained of Lee's acknowledged writings; but a few characteristic passages may be allowed: and the following letter, which he wrote to his sister in England after his trial, will serve to show what his feelings were, both with regard to his own case, and to the unhappy war between the American states and the mother country.

*Prato Rio in Virginia, Dec. 15th, 1779.*

My Dear Sister,

I wrote to you a letter two months ago, but as in the present circumstances of affairs there are a thousand risks that a letter will not arrive, I think proper to send you a duplicate. Your letter from Chester, dated Jany. the 23d, came safely to my hands: in the course of this and the last year, I wrote to you two letters in-

forming you of the state of my health and spirits, the two points which I know from your natural affection and tenderness you must be most solicitous about. They have both, thank Heaven, never failed me a single day, and until I am conscious of having committed some unworthy action, (which I can assure you is not at present the case) the iniquity of men shall never bear me down. I have, it is true, uneasy feelings, but not on my own personal account; I feel for the ravages and devastations of this continent, and the ruin of thousands of worthy individuals; I feel for the empire of Great Britain, for its glory, welfare, and existence. I feel for the fortunes of my relations and friends, which may receive a dreadful shock in this convulsion. I have been accused of making it my study, and perverting all the talents I am master of, to involve my country in the ruinous situation she now is in: you know, all my correspondents and acquaintance know, how false this imputation is. I will not enter into political retrospections, as it is probable my letter will be opened before it reaches you, but I hope I may safely appeal to the substance and spirit of the letters which the public have already seen, for the integrity of my intentions. I mean the letters addressed to Lord Piercy and General Burgoyne, wherein I prophesied the fatal events that have followed. I cannot help lamenting that another which I wrote to General Gage (wherein I labour'd to open his eyes) was not published. I personally loved the man, but he has much to answer for, not less I will venture to say, than the blood of one hundred thousand Englishmen, or the immediate descendants of Englishmen; but he has to answer also for the subversion of the mighty fabrick of the British Empire; but I am running unawares into politics, the subject it is my busyness to keep clear of. You express a concern for my personal honour: as I suppose you allude to the affair of Monmouth, all I shall say is that, as I believe the proceedings of the Court have been sent to England, and as you have eyes to read, and judgment



to make comments, I may be intirely easy on that subject ; but as it possibly may happen that these curious records may never fall into your hands, be assured of this, my Dr. Sister, that if the transactions of that day were to pass over again, there is no one step I took which I would not again take, and that there is no one measure I adopted which will not stand the test of the severest military criticks. and in point of spirit, of the most enthusiastick grenadier ; so once more, I conjure you to be at ease on this subject, as I have from the beginning. I have now only to beg my love to all my relations and particular friends, to the . . . &c., &c.

God bless you, my Dr. Sydney, send you long life and uninterrupted spirits ; this is most devoutly the prayer of your most affectionate Brother.

(Signed)

CHARLES LEE.

The latitude which Charles Lee allowed himself in conversation, exposed his character to unjust aspersions.\* By many, and particularly by his enemies in America, he was denounced as an Atheist ; but we have satisfactory proofs in some of his writings which probably were not designed for the press, and in the testimonies of men who knew him well, that such an imputation was calumnious. Lee's American biographer speaks thus : " He has often asserted that he thought the Christian religion, unincumbered of its sophistications, the most excellent, as comprehending the most divine system of ethics, consequently of a divine nature ; but at the same time he disapproved of the length and tediousness of the liturgies of the various sects. As to the dogmas, he considered many of them absurd, if not impious, and derogatory to the honour, dignity, and

\* "A talent for repartee, united with a quickness of penetration, created him many enemies. A character so eccentric and singular as his, could not fail of attracting the publick attention. His *small friends* frequently passed severe criticisms on his words and actions. Narrowly watched, every little slip or failure was noticed and represented to his disadvantage."—*Mr. Langworthy's Memoir of Gen. Lee.*



wisdom of the Godhead, or Omniscient Ruler and Moderator of the infinity of worlds that surround us."

In an Utopian scheme which Lee sketched out as "a plan for the formation of a military colony," there occurs a passage which develops more fully his peculiar opinions on the subject of religion, and marks his serious sense of its paramount importance. After tracing an outline of his martial colony, he says, "But as there is reason to apprehend that a nation, merely of warriors, hunters, and agriculturers, may become extremely ferocious in their manners, some method should be devised of softening, or counteracting, this consequential ferocity: I know of none equally efficacious with a general cultivation and study of music and poetry; on which principle I would propose, that music and poetry should be the great regimen of the two most important articles of government, religion and war; all other good qualities might follow of course; for without religion, no warlike community can exist; and with religion, if it is pure and unsophisticated, all immoralities are incompatible. Music and poetry therefore, which ought to be inseparably blended, are the grand pivots of a really brave, active, warlike, and virtuous society. This doctrine, I am conscious, may shock quakers, puritans, and rigid sectarists of every kind; but I do not speak to quakers, puritans, and rigid sectarists. At the first, and from the bottom of my heart, I detest and despise them. I speak to men and soldiers, who wish, and are able, to assert and defend the rights of humanity; and, let me add, to vindicate the character of God Almighty, and real Christianity, which have been so long dishonored by sectarists of every kind and complexion, catholics, church of England men, presbyterians and methodists. I could wish therefore, that the community of soldiers (who are to be all Christians) should establish one common form of worship, with which every member must acquiesce, at least in attendance on divine worship and the observation of the prescribed ceremonies; but these so contrived as not to shock any man

who has been bred up in any of the different sects. For which reason, let all expositions of the scripture, and all dogmas, be forever banished. Let it be sufficient that he acknowledges the existence, providence, and goodness of God Almighty; that he reverences Jesus Christ, but let the question never be asked whether he considers Jesus Christ as only a divine person commissioned by God for divine purposes, as the Son of God, or as God himself. These sophistical subtilties only lead to a doubt of the whole. Let it be sufficient therefore that he believes in God, in his providence, and in the mediation of Jesus Christ, whether a real God, or only a divinely inspired mortal: for which reason, to prevent the impertinence and ill consequences of dogmatising, no professional priest, of any sort whatever, shall be admitted in the community. But still I am of opinion that a sacred order, or hierarchy, should be established, and in the following manner. That this hierarchy are not to be expositors of the divine law, which ought to be understood by every member of common capacity, but as the servitors or administrators of the solemn ceremonies to be observed in the worship of the Supreme Being, of his Son, or missionary."

"The ceremonies are to consist in poetical hymns of praise and thanksgiving, set to music; such, for instance, as Pope's Universal Prayer, parts of the Common Prayer, and many pieces selected from the Psalms of David: for those long prayers with which all the churches of the different sects are infested, entering into such minute details with God Almighty, as if he was your factor in a foreign country, have been justly deemed by many wise men not only tiresome, but impious impertinences.

"Ablutions, such as are practised in the religions of the East, seem to me to be really a divine institution. These Easterns wisely say, that a pure soul cannot inhabit a filthy body; that a purified body is the best symbol of a clean spirit; that it is indecent and wicked

to present yourself before your Creator in a dirtier condition than you ought to appear in before an earthly superior. Admitting these figures to be hyperbolical, the institution certainly is extremely wise, as it contributes so essentially to health and the agreements of society."

"A grand religious concert of thanksgivings to be performed every Sunday; and two other days in the week, suppose Tuesdays and Fridays, but shorter, and with less pomp; for there is nothing so impolitick as to make pomp and ceremony too frequent; they entirely lose their effect. The thanksgivings or hymns, therefore, on these common days, to be extremely short, but sensible and energetic. Long prayers, such as the morning service of the Church of England, with the addition of a long unmeaning sermon, hummed through the nose, perhaps, of a crop-sick parson, who can scarcely read his own writing, or the still more insufferable cant of the puritan preachers, must be the bane of all religion. . . . In short, the ceremonies of divine worship must be made solemn, pompous, and elevating; but we will quit the subject of religion, and pass to the law.

"As an agrarian law is to be established and rigidly observed, and as the children of both sexes are to inherit an equal proportion (for this is to be a fundamental maxim), the most simple code may be extracted for civil cases, from the common laws of England, or from those of Denmark, which appear to be excellent. A *professional* lawyer, therefore, will be totally unnecessary: indeed I should as soon think of inoculating my community for the plague, as admitting one of these gentlemen to reside among us. All requisite knowledge of the law will be the common accomplishment of every gentleman. . . . With respect to criminal matters, I would adopt Beccaria's scheme: its excellencies have been demonstrated in the Tuscan dominions. When the present Grand Duke acceded to the ducal throne,

he found Tuscany the most abandoned nation of all Italy, filled with robbers and assassins. Everywhere for a series of years previous to the government of this excellent prince, were seen gallows, wheels, and tortures of every kind; and the robberies and murders were not at all less frequent. He had read and admired the Marquis of Beccaria, and determined to try the effects of his plan. He put a stop to all capital punishments, even for the greatest crimes; and the consequences have convinced the world of its wholesomeness. . . . Tuscany, from being a theatre of the greatest crimes and villanies of every species, is become the safest and best ordered state of Europe. . . . But if we had not this example, and that of the Empress Elizabeth (who adopted the same plan with the same good effect), before our eyes, the inculcating an idea in a military people that death is the most terrible of all punishments, is certainly the most absurd of solecisms. Nothing great can be expected from a community which is taught to consider it as such. On the contrary, death ought, as far as human nature will admit, to be made a matter of indifference." . . . "I have often laughed at the glaring contradiction in the proceedings, in this article, in the British armies, and others in which I have served. I have seen two or three wretches, who had the misfortune to be detected in marauding, or attempting to desert, taken out with awful form, encircled by a multitude who had been guilty of, or had intended to have committed the same crimes, but happily had not been discovered; the chaplain, in his canonicals, telling them how dreadful a thing it was for their souls to be divorced from their bodies, and to be urged on to the tribunal of their Maker with these horrid sins on their heads. A few hours afterwards, some desperate expedition is ordered to be executed by the very men who had been present at the execution, who had committed, or intended to commit, the very same horrid crimes; and the officer appointed to command the expedition harangues the soldiers as

usual; assures them that death is not a serious affair; that, as all men must sooner or later die, it is of little moment when it happens. Thus it may be said we blow hot and cold with the same breath. I am therefore absolutely and totally against capital punishments, at least in our military community. Let the loss of liberty and ignominy be inculcated as the extreme of all punishments," &c., &c.

But enough of Lee's military reveries. Of his pamphlets and letters the most striking are those written on occasions when his passions were strongly excited; his style is often very nervous, and his sallies extremely poignant. His indignation seems to have been raised to fever heat by the publication of Hume's history of our first kings of the house of Stuart, a race whom my cousin held in particular abhorrence, though it must be owned that he came to regard the royal family of Brunswick with an almost equal antipathy. From two short essays which he left among his papers, it appears that he entertained intentions of writing an examen of the work of David Hume, "whose philosophical character and speciousness of style (says Lee) render him infinitely more dangerous than his fellow-labourers in misleading our judgment and blinding our understandings."



L I F E

O F

C H A R L E S   L E E ,

M A J O R - G E N E R A L   I N   T H E   A R M Y   O F   T H E   R E V O L U T I O N ;

B Y

J A R E D   S P A R K S .

Reprinted from Sparks's American Biography, Vol. 18, Boston, 1846.





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## PREFACE.

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AFTER the death of General Lee, his papers fell into the hands of Mr. William Goddard, of Baltimore, and have since been preserved in his family. He issued proposals for publishing selected parts of them in three volumes ; but, for some reason not explained, this design was never fulfilled. A few years afterwards, Mr. Langworthy published a brief selection in a small volume, to which an imperfect Memoir of his life was prefixed. Recently, another Memoir, more valuable and interesting, has appeared in England, from the pen of Sir Henry Bunbury.

In addition to these sources, the writer of the following sketch has been favored by Mr. William G. Goddard with the use of the original papers left by General Lee. Among these are letter-books containing his official correspondence during a large part of the period of his public service in the revolution ; and also many drafts of letters written in England, Poland, Italy, and other countries, before he came to America. Access has likewise been had to his correspondence with Congress, General Washington, and the prominent leaders in the civil and military lines, while he resided in America. To the kindness of Sir Henry Bunbury the writer is indebted for a copy of more than thirty of General Lee's letters to his sister ; and his particular acknowledgments are due to Captain Ralph R. Wormeley, R. N., of London, and Mr. William B. Reed, of Philadelphia, for the generous aid they have rendered in enabling him to procure other materials.‡





## CHAPTER I.

*Birth and Education.—Joins the Army.—Campaigns in America during the French War.—Wounded in the Attack upon Ticonderoga under General Abercromby.—Aids in the Conquest of Niagara and Montreal.—Returns to Europe.—Writes a Pamphlet in Favor of retaining Canada at the Peace.—Engaged in a Campaign in Portugal.—Successful Action at Villa Velha.*

AMONG those distinguished in the American revolution, few began their career with brighter prospects, or closed it under a darker cloud, than General Charles Lee. Endowed with uncommon abilities, possessing a chivalrous spirit, a soldier of long experience and undaunted courage, a true friend of liberty and of the rights of mankind, he engaged in the cause with an ardor, which gained for him at once the confidence and raised high the hopes of the whole people. But these eminent qualities were shaded by a waywardness of temper, a rashness of resolution, a license of speech, an eager ambition, and an eccentricity of manners, which defeated his own lofty purposes, and disappointed the expectations of those, who received him as a friend, and hailed him as a benefactor. It would be ungrateful to say, that he did not render to this country, in the time of her trial, important services; it would be futile to deny, that, by his indiscretion and ill-timed vehemence, he contributed much to diminish the respect, which these services might otherwise claim. He was alike the artificer of the envied reputation which he enjoyed at one period of his life, and of the misfortunes that cast a gloom over its close.

CHARLES LEE was a native of England, the youngest

son of General John Lee, of Dernhall, in Cheshire. His mother was Isabella, the second daughter of Sir Henry Bunbury, of Stanney, in the same county. He was born in 1731, and from childhood was destined to the profession of arms, having received a commission at eleven years of age. Little is known of his early education and discipline. For some time he was placed at the grammar school of Bury St. Edmunds, and also at a school in Switzerland, where, in addition to the Latin and Greek classics, he obtained a thorough knowledge of the French language.

Whatever advantages he may have enjoyed, his subsequent writings prove that he turned them to good account. Ardent, ambitious, and of exceedingly quick parts, he pursued with avidity whatsoever he took in hand. His reading was extensive, and not confined in its range or in the subjects to which it was directed. By study, and by his rambles in various countries, he acquired a competent skill in the Spanish, Italian, and German tongues. Among his papers are many fragments, in his own handwriting, in Latin, French, and Italian, showing that the use of these languages was familiar to him. In short, his education, as qualifying him for the practical affairs of life, would seem to have been not inferior to that of many, who go through the more regular forms of a university course.

As the time approached for entering upon the active duties of his profession, he devoted much attention to the science of military tactics. At the age of twenty-four we find him at the head of a company of grenadiers. The long war, which severed Canada from the French power, was just at this time breaking out, and the young officer was destined to gain his first experience in arms on the frontiers of the American colonies.

For the campaign of 1757, the British ministry formed the grand project of taking Louisburg, the Gibraltar of America, which had been captured, during the last war, chiefly by an expedition from New England, but

inconsiderately given back to the French at the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. It was now determined to recover this formidable fortress. Early in the spring, the troops for the expedition were drawn together in the neighborhood of Cork, in Ireland, and vessels of war and transports were assembled for their embarkation at that port. The regiment to which Lee belonged was destined to take a part in this enterprise. A large fleet, consisting of ships of the line, frigates, and transports, with five thousand troops, sailed from the harbor of Cork on the 8th of May. The fleet kept together twelve days, when it was separated by a fog, and again by a storm; but all the vessels arrived at Halifax in the early part of July. They were here joined by six thousand men from New York, and all the preliminary measures were adopted without delay for the grand object of the expedition.

Intelligence was soon received, however, that the French had thrown so strong a force into Louisburg, and guarded it by so many heavy ships, that it was inexpedient to hazard an attack. And thus the scheme, which had begun with such a vast array of preparation, was deferred till the next year.

Meantime, the troops were employed at Halifax, and in other garrisons of Nova Scotia; but in the early part of the following year, a large detachment of this army was sent to New York. It is uncertain whether Lee accompanied these troops, or preceded them; but he was in New York and Philadelphia early in the spring of 1758, and in the following June we find him stationed with a part of the army at Schenectady. Some time after he left England, he purchased a company in the forty-fourth regiment, for which he paid nine hundred pounds.

While at Schenectady, he had much intercourse with the Mohawk Indians, and was captivated by their manners, their "hospitable, civil and friendly" deportment, the personal beauty of many of them, their dress, their graceful carriage, and by what he calls their good breed-

ing, or "constant desire to do everything that will please you, and strict carefulness not to say or do anything that may offend you." He became so great a favorite with them, that he was adopted into the tribe of the Bear, under the name of Ounewaterika, which signifies boiling water, or one whose spirits are never asleep. By this adoption, among other marks of distinction, he acquired the privilege of smoking a pipe in their councils.\*

But he was not destined long to enjoy these honors. His regiment was ordered to march to Fort William Henry, at the south end of Lake George; and, by the 1st of July, ten thousand provincials and six thousand regular troops were assembled at that place, under the command of General Abercromby. Then followed the memorable assault on Ticonderoga, in which the English were repulsed with a heavy loss, the gallant Lord Howe was killed, and Stark and other provincial officers gave proofs of the spirit and valor, that were to be called to a severer trial at a future day.

Lee was wounded while bravely attempting to penetrate to the French breastworks. In a letter to a friend, written a few days after the action, he says, "It is with the greatest difficulty that I make out a few lines to you, as I have received a very bad wound in the side, which has, I believe, broken some of my ribs, and rendered it almost impossible for me to raise myself from my bed." He then describes the principal operations of the army from the time it left Fort William Henry, in more than a thousand boats launched on the waters of Lake George, till it returned from this disastrous expedition. According to his belief, and, he says, the belief of the other officers, the disgraceful failure was owing to the weakness and cowardice of the General, who left the troops exposed in a hopeless conflict without orders for five hours in front of the lines of Ticonderoga, and who retreated precipitately up Lake George with

\* MS. Letter dated at Schenectady, June 18th, 1758.

the whole army, when he might have renewed the assault with a moral certainty of success.\*

Lee, with other wounded officers, was removed to Albany, where he remained till his wound was healed. He was next stationed on Long Island, at which place he probably continued through the winter. In this encampment he was led into an adventure, which might have ended in fatal consequences. A person, whom he calls "a little cowardly surgeon," treated him very ill, composing a libel on him, and reading it to the General. The affront drew from Lee a severe chastisement. The surgeon had not the spirit to resent it in the way usually practised by military men, when points of honor are concerned. He placed himself in a road where he knew Lee was to pass, seized the bridle of his horse, presented a pistol at his breast, and fired. At that instant the horse started to the right, and Lee escaped with a contusion on his body. The ruffian drew another pistol, but it was struck from his hand by Captain Dunbar, who happened to be present. The affair was settled afterwards, by the consent of Lee and Dunbar, on condition that the culprit should make a public acknowledgment of his crime and leave the army.†

The next campaign was performed by the regiment to which Lee belonged in the expedition against the French garrison at Niagara. The place was invested

\* In the same letter he pays the following tribute to that gallant young officer, Lord Howe, who was killed in a skirmish at the head of an advancing column, the day before the attack on Ticonderoga. "Very few men were lost on our side, in this skirmish; but among these few was the most estimable Lord Howe, whose only fault was that of not knowing his own value. In short, the loss of him was so great, that it would not be rant or exaggeration to exclaim, as Antony does on Cæsar's death :

'O, what a fall was there, my countrymen !  
Then I, and you, and all of us fell down.'

It was entirely owing to his activity and industry, that everything was in readiness at so much an earlier season of the year than usual; it was owing to his weight, consequence, and spirit, that the General was kept from following the dictates of his weak and despicable managers solely and implicitly, as he did afterwards; and it is most certain, that had he lived, the public would not have suffered this loss, nor our arms have been disgraced in this manner."

*MS. Letter.*

† *MS. Letter*, dated at Long Island, December 7th, 1758.

by two thousand British troops, and one thousand Indians of the Six Nations, under General Prideaux. After a siege of nineteen days, and a sharp action with a body of French and Indians, who were coming as a re-enforcement, in which the English were victorious, the garrison capitulated. The conquest was very important, since it cut off the channel of intercourse between the French in Canada and Louisiana, and threw into the hands of the English the entire control of the upper lakes. Captain Lee was much exposed during the engagement with the French and Indians, and two balls grazed his hair.

Soon after the capitulation, Lee was sent with another officer and fourteen men to ascertain what became of the remnant of the French army that escaped from the battle. They were the first English troops that ever crossed Lake Erie. They went to Presq' Isle, and thence by way of Venango down the western branch of the Ohio to Fort Duquesne, which was then in possession of the British. He remained there but a short time, when he began a long march of seven hundred miles to meet General Amherst at Crown Point. From this place he performed another march to Oswego, and was then ordered to Philadelphia, where he was stationed through the winter on the recruiting service.\*

In the campaign of 1760, Lee's regiment was attached to the forces led by General Amherst from Lake Ontario down the St. Lawrence to Montreal, a navigation never before undertaken by a British army. The surrender of Montreal completed the conquest of Canada, so nobly begun the year before by Wolfe on the Plains of Abraham, and closed the war in America. Lee soon afterwards returned to England.

This brief sketch has been given, not with a view of illustrating the personal conduct or military merit of the young captain of grenadiers; there are no materials for a narrative of this kind; in his letters he speaks little of his own adventures; but these four years of

\* MS. Letter, dated at Philadelphia, March 1st, 1760.



unremitted service, during which his days and nights were wholly passed in camps or in the field, must have furnished a mind like his with most valuable lessons of experience as an officer, and inured him to the habits and privations of a soldier's life.\*

Canada being now conquered, and the war drawing to a close, the terms of peace began to be warmly discussed by different parties in England. One party was for restoring Canada to the French, and taking Guadeloupe and other possessions in the West Indies as an equivalent. This scheme was defended by the able and eloquent pen of Burke. On the other side, Franklin urged, with singular clearness and force of reasoning, the policy of holding Canada. In the course of the controversy, Charles Lee is said to have entered the lists in defence of the same policy, and to have written a pamphlet which received the commendation of Franklin.†

\* General Armstrong relates the following anecdote of Lee in his *Life of Montgomery*. When the British finally captured Louisburg, in 1758, a bomb thrown from the fort knocked off the hat and grazed the skull of General Lawrence, who was standing in the trenches, but without seriously injuring him. When Lee heard of this incident, he exclaimed, "I'll resign to-morrow." "Why so?" asked the person to whom he spoke. "Because," said the wit, "none but a fool will remain in a service in which the generals' heads are bomb-proof."

† It has been supposed, that Lee wrote the tract entitled "Considerations on the Importance of Canada, and the Bay and River of St. Lawrence," published in London, 1759. The style of this performance, however, bears no resemblance to that of the writings known to have come from his pen. Moreover, the dedication to Mr. Pitt, prefixed to the pamphlet, is dated "London, October 17th, 1759," at which time Lee was probably in America.

The conjecture that he wrote "A Letter to an Honourable Brigadier-General, Commander-in-Chief of his Majesty's Forces in Canada," published in 1760, is more probable. The style bears strong marks of his peculiar vein and manner, and the sentiments accord with those which he expressed on other occasions. It is a severe and pungent philippic against General Townshend, who assumed the command after the death of Wolfe, and who, in his public despatches, was more brief in his praises of the immortal hero of the Plains of Abraham, than his extraordinary merits and services justly required. In one of his letters written from America a few months after this event, Lee says, "What an irreparable loss was that glorious hero, Wolfe! and such frankness, such unbounded generosity to particulars, such zeal for the public, with such amazing talents for war, that not to be in raptures with this divine character, is, I think, an impiety to our country, which gave him birth. General Townshend seems to have been sparing of his eulogiums upon the fallen conqueror, on whom (as the whole glory of this mighty acquisition was conferred on him by the unanimous voice of the army) he seems to have looked with an invidi-



Meantime, Lee was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, and was soon called again into active service. Spain had committed hostilities upon Portugal, and threatened to overwhelm that country with her armies, mainly to compel this latter power to join France and Spain in their war against England. For a long time, a treaty of peace and amity had existed between England and his Portuguese Majesty, and he could see no reason why he should violate his faith, and desert an old friend, for the sake of embroiling himself in the quarrels of his neighbors, in which he had no concern. In this state of things, his Britannic Majesty could do no less than sustain the cause of an ally, who had thus continued faithful to his pledges. An army of eight thousand men was despatched to Portugal, commanded at first by Lord Tyrawley, and afterwards by the Earl of Loudoun. Among the other officers were Brigadier-General Burgoyne and Colonel Charles Lee.

Before the arrival of these troops, the Spaniards had passed the frontiers of Portugal, committed depredations, and made themselves masters of several important cities. The combined English and Portuguese armies were at length put under the command of the Count de la Lippe, who had won a brilliant reputation in the German wars. After various manœuvres and battles, the Spaniards were checked in their progress, and, at the end of the campaign, they retired within their own borders. Lee acquitted himself honorably during this service, and on one occasion gained distinguished applause.

He was under the immediate command of General Burgoyne, who was stationed on the south bank of the River Tagus, opposite to the old Moorish castle of Villa Velha. This castle, and the village and plains

ous eye. Such is the fate of superior, unrivalled merit in our contemporaries." The pamphlet mentioned above has been recently reprinted in London, with an Introduction by Mr. Simons, in which he attempts to prove that it was written by JUNIUS. His proofs are conjectural, and will apply with equal or greater force to General Lee.

around it, were occupied by the Spaniards. Discovering that a large part of their forces had been drawn off, Burgoyne formed a plan of attacking those that remained, which were posted on two small hills near the castle; and he entrusted the execution of the enterprise to Colonel Lee.

After encountering considerable difficulty in fording the river with a detachment of infantry and cavalry, concealed from the enemy by the darkness of the night, he continued his march through intricate passes in the mountains, gained the enemy's rear undiscovered, and at two o'clock in the morning rushed into their camp. A sharp conflict ensued. The grenadiers charged with the bayonet, and the dragoons harassed the bewildered Spaniards in their attempts to escape. They fought with courage, however, and made such resistance as they could. Several Spanish officers were killed while endeavoring to rally the men, and among them a brigadier-general. A body of horse collected and presented a bold front, but they were repulsed by the British cavalry. Before the dawn of day, the victory was achieved, and the enemy was routed in all quarters, leaving many slain and a large booty in the hands of the victors. The magazines were destroyed, four cannon were spiked, and nineteen prisoners, with sixty artillery mules, a few horses, and a quantity of valuable baggage, were conducted to the General's camp.

This spirited achievement took place on the 6th of October, 1762. Lord Loudoun, in his report to the ministry, called it a "very gallant action;" and the Count de la Lippe said, in a letter to the Earl of Egremont, "so brilliant a stroke speaks for itself."

Weary of the war, all the belligerents were now ready for peace. The strife ended with this campaign, in which the Portuguese, with the aid of their allies, had driven the Spaniards out of their country. The British forces were recalled to England, and Colonel Lee brought with him testimonials of his bravery and good conduct from the King of Portugal and the Count de la Lippe.

## CHAPTER II.

*Projects a Plan for a Colony on the Ohio River.—Writes on the Affairs of the Colonies.—Goes to Poland, and becomes Aid-de-Camp to the King Stanislaus.—Visits Constantinople.—Returns to England.—His Remarks on Politics and public Men.—Disappointed in his Hope of Promotion.—Returns to Poland by Way of Paris and Vienna.*

AMONG Lee's papers is found a scheme for establishing two new colonies, one on the Ohio below the Wabash, and the other on the Illinois, which appears to have been projected soon after the peace. A company was to be formed, and grants were to be obtained from the King. It was a part of the plan to procure settlers from New England, and among the Protestants in Germany and Switzerland. In describing the advantages which he thinks could not fail to flow from these settlements, he discovers an accurate knowledge of the resources of the country, and of the facilities of navigation furnished by the great lakes and rivers of the west. In a political view, they would be important, protecting the old colonies from the incursions of the western Indians, preventing their intercourse with the Spaniards at the south, and opening a new channel of commerce through the Mississippi and the Gulf of Mexico.

The proposal was rejected by the ministers, who had adopted the policy of allowing no settlements in the territory beyond the Allegany Mountains. Experience proved, however, that this was a shortsighted policy, at variance with the interests of the government, and hostile to the prosperity of the colonies. A few years later, by the able interposition of Franklin, a company succeeded in obtaining a grant for a settlement on the Ohio; but the approaching troubles of the revolution prevented its execution.

Although baffled in this scheme, Lee continued to take a lively concern in the affairs of the colonies. He disapproved the plan of the ministry for prosecuting the Indian war, immediately after the peace of 1763, and reprobated the principles upon which this plan was founded. The germs, which gradually sprouted into the Stamp Act, had already begun to vegetate. The doctrine was now for the first time broached, that the army in America should be paid by the colonists, not merely for their own defence, but for the protection of Canada. Lee's pen was not idle on this occasion. He attacked the ministers and their measures, both in regard to the mischievous counsels to which they listened on American affairs, and to the policy which marked their designs.

"We are told," he writes, "that this country is under no obligation to be at the expense of maintaining an army for the support of Canada, the advantages of which principally, or indeed solely, accrue to our colonies. They ought to pay for it; they are able, but not willing. The first of these positions, if they who advanced it have conversed only with sailors, who probably judge of the abilities of the country in general by the opulent aspect of the seaport towns, may admit of some excuse; but, if they will take the opportunity to consult the officers of the army, who have any knowledge of the interior parts of the country, and who can have no interest in the affairs of the colonies but what affects the common cause of this country and humanity, they will receive very different accounts. They will be told that the settlers, even within a very few miles from the sea, are so far from being equal to the support of an army, that they require every kind of assistance and restorative which the mother country can possibly afford them."

He pursues the subject with particular reference to the misinformation of the ministers concerning the colonies, and to the system of military operations then pursued in America. He ascribes the cause to the false

or exaggerated reports of interested persons, and especially to the baneful influence of Sir Jeffrey Amherst, for whose abilities and dispositions he entertained but very little respect. At this early period, Lee gives decided indications of his sentiments concerning the relations between the mother country and the colonies. Nor were these sentiments the result only of his experience and observation in America, but also of close research into historical facts. In a well written paper, he sketches briefly the colonial policy of the parent state from the first settlement of the country, bringing out all the prominent points with remarkable clearness, judgment, and precision.

For several years, the restless spirit of Lee had found ample room for exercising itself in the sphere to which it was peculiarly adapted, that of the active operations of the war. The scene was now changed, and the ardor of his temper would not allow him to be quiet. He plunged into the turmoils of politics with the same boldness and vehemence that he would have shown in fighting a battle, or assaulting an enemy at the head of his regiment; and this apparently from the mere impulse of his nature, and not from the desire of courting any party, or of seeking advancement in a political career. The measures, of the administration, and the character of its distinguished leaders, became the themes of his pointed satire and scorching invectives, both in speech and writing, and at length the objects of his strong aversion and open hostility.

His secret motives, if he had any besides the burning fire of his own spirit, it would not be easy now to ascertain. His opinions, from whatever source they sprang, were openly avowed, and agreed in no particular with those which ruled in the counsels of the nation. His ideas of liberty and of political rights savored of high republican principles. The American contest was yet in embryo; but even at that time he evidently perceived symptoms of its approach, and gave no dubious indications of the part he was prepared to act.

Meantime, his military ardor did not subside. An opportunity offered, as he now thought, for gratifying his ambition in this line on a new theatre. The distractions in Poland had brought that unhappy country to the verge of a war, and the friends of humanity were looking forward with hope to the possibility of her once more gaining her ancient independence, suppressing her internal dissensions, and averting the ruin in which her treacherous neighbors were plotting to involve her. Lee determined to embark in this cause, apparently as a soldier of fortune, without any definite purpose as to the side he should take. Action, the glory of arms, high rank in his profession, were probably the images that floated in his imagination and directed his course.

He arrived in Poland about the middle of February, 1764, having passed through Holland, Brunswick, and Prussia. Favored by the recommendations of the Count de la Lippe, he was received by the hereditary Prince of Brunswick, "not like a stranger well recommended, but like an old deserving friend," and was furnished by him with letters to the courts of Berlin and Warsaw. He was charmed with the great Frederick. "Each time he was at court, the King talked with him more than half an hour, and chiefly on the topic with which he was best acquainted, American affairs." His Majesty was "totally unceremonious and familiar, and his manner was such as to banish that constraint and awe," which the character of such high personages naturally inspires. He found other members of the royal family "extremely curious on the subject of America." After remaining a few days at Berlin, he hastened forward to Warsaw.\*

Poniatowsky, who had been recently elected King of Poland, with the name of Stanislaus Augustus, and who was one year younger than Lee, had passed some time in England before his elevation to the throne, and had gained many personal friends in that country. From some of these friends the British Colonel would natu-

\* MS. Letter, dated at Warsaw, April 3d, 1764.



rally obtain good recommendations, since his military character stood very high, and he had given unquestionable proofs of superior talents and accomplishments. At all events, he was most kindly received by Stanislaus and the principal Polish nobility, and was soon attached to the person of the King, as one of his aids-de-camp. The particulars are described by himself, in a letter to Mr. Yorke.

"Your brother, Sir Joseph Yorke," he says, "received me in the manner I expected from your brother.\* He gave me the warmest letter to Wroughton, our minister here, in whom I have experienced a real friendship, if friendship may be pronounced from the utmost pains, activity, and zeal, to serve me. In short, I shall not take the liberty to trouble you with the detail of my peregrination and progress, but inform you that his Polish Majesty has, from your recommendation, I believe contrary to the inclinations of many of those whom the constitution of this country renders it necessary to manage, declared me his aid-de-camp. He had it not in his power to provide for me in the army, as the republic raises no new troops, and those few they have are already disposed of. The army was the object of my ambition; and I hope you will believe me sincere when I say that, if I had not a good opinion of the King as a man, let my necessities be what they might, I would not have accepted a place about his person. But I really have a high opinion of him. He appears to me not in the least elevated by his great fortune; and the bearing well a sudden exaltation to power, wealth, or grandeur, I have always judged to be the ordeal of a good heart.

"As a King, he must be judged of hereafter; but, if a good understanding, a well disposed heart, and the education of a subject, promise well, the chances are for him. As a man, I really think him agreeable and accomplished. He is easy, civil, and totally unceremonious. He is perfectly acquainted with our best

\* Sir Joseph Yorke was at this time Minister Plenipotentiary at the Hague.



English authors. Shakspeare is his god ; which, to me, is the test of every man's sense and feeling. But I should make a thousand apologies for expatiating on a character so much better known to you than to myself ; but I love the man, and am fond of the subject ; and likewise I think it may not be unsatisfactory to you to find that King Poniatowsky is not different from your friend Count Poniatowsky."

Such were his first impressions ; in regard to the personal character of Poniatowsky, they seem never to have changed. Lee bestowed an uncommon mark of his regard upon his Polish Majesty. In some way not explained, he had become the fortunate owner of a sword reputed to have belonged to Oliver Cromwell. This sword he ordered to be sent to him from England, as a present to the King of Poland, who, he observes, "though a King, is a great admirer of that extraordinary man."

The British aid-de-camp met with good companionship at Warsaw. He was honored with a place at the King's table, and an apartment in the palace of Prince Czartorinsky. This Prince had resided in England, could write and speak the language fluently, and was an admirer of the best English authors.

The state of affairs did not change, as he had hoped. The army continued on a limited scale. The distractions of the country, the growing spirit of disaffection to the government, became daily more formidable and alarming ; nor was the power of the King adequate to raise or wield a force by which he could quell the agitation, or renovate the declining fortunes of Poland. A Russian army, like a hungry tiger, was prowling on the frontiers, fomenting discord within, and ready to seize and devour its prey whenever the exhausted strength of the Poles should afford a convenient opportunity. No man was ever placed in a more awkward or unnatural position than Poniatowsky. At heart a friend to his country, to her independence and liberties, he was betrayed, by his passionate fondness for a crown

and the empty name of king, to be the instrument of her ruin in the impious hands of foreign despots. In abetting such a cause, Lee certainly cannot be regarded as acting upon his high republican principles. It may be presumed, that distinction in his favorite profession of arms was his ruling motive.

There are no means of ascertaining how he employed himself for nearly two years after his first arrival in Poland. In January, 1766, he accepted a proposal of the King to accompany his ambassador to Constantinople, prompted more by curiosity than by any higher object. After reaching the frontiers of Turkey, his impatience could not await the slow movements of the ambassador, and he joined himself to an escort of the Grand Seignior's treasure, which was annually sent from Moldavia. He soon had reason to repent of his rashness, for he narrowly escaped starving and freezing on the summits of the Bulgarian Mountains. So ill provided were his conductors with the articles necessary for such a journey, that several men and horses died of the cold. Overcome with fatigue and exhaustion, he at last reached Constantinople, where he remained about four months, and then returned to Poland, rejoiced that he had not been buried in the ruins of his dwelling by an earthquake, which threw down houses and destroyed many lives in the Turkish capital whilst he was there.\*

In December of the same year we find him again in England. He brought a letter of recommendation from his Polish Majesty to King George, which he presented with his own hand, reminding the King, at the same time, of the promise he had made in his favor to Lord Thanet three years before. General Conway, then Secretary of State, flattered him also with the expectation that something would be done for him. Lee sought promotion, and thought the interest he could make through his powerful friends, added to what he believed to be his own merit, would be sufficient to secure

\* MS. Letters from Constantinople, March 1st, and May 28th, 1766.

the fulfilment of his wishes. Weeks passed on, however, and he received no answer to his application; and his hopes were fed only by vague expressions of civility from men in power. The disheartening truth was finally impressed upon him, that he was not in favor with the government, and that it would be in vain for him to urge his pretensions any further. The cause of this disfavor has never been explained. It may perhaps be ascribed to his political sentiments, his opinions not only of public measures but of public men, and the extreme freedom with which he avowed them on all occasions. Whatever may have been the cause, his treatment seems to have operated with a peculiar power upon his sensitive mind, and to have produced a keen resentment both against the King and some of the ministers, which rankled ever afterwards in his breast.\*

He appears to have contracted a warm personal attachment to King Stanislaus, and a correspondence was kept up between them. In a letter written to him from London, October 20th, 1767, we may perceive evidences of this attachment, as well as of his disappointment on arriving in his native country. He says, "The assurances your letter gives me of your good opinion and regard, I shall ever consider as the happiest, the most honorable circumstance of my life. They make ample amends for the enmities I have drawn upon myself from certain powerful quarters in my own country, where, perhaps from some just judgment of God, the same qualities which would recommend to your Majesty are highly obnoxious. I devoutly wish, and proudly hope, for my own honor, that I may ever possess a place in the esteem of your

\* If he was the author of "A Letter to an Honorable Brigadier-General," as there is strong presumptive evidence for believing, it is not difficult to account for his want of success. The author of that performance had attacked the military character of General Townshend and Lord George Sackville on such tender points, and with such polished keenness of sarcasm, as to render it impossible that he should be forgiven by the friends of those officers, or their supporters in the government.

Majesty, and remain the aversion of those who so widely, so totally, differ from you." He then proceeds to answer the King's inquiries respecting public occurrences and public men in England, and describes in strong language the situation of Pitt, who had lately become a peer. He touches likewise on American affairs. The Stamp Act has been passed and repealed during his absence.

"Nothing," he observes, "could make the American colonists cast off their obedience, or even respect, to their mother country, but some attempt on the essence of their liberty; such as undoubtedly the Stamp Act was. If it had remained unrepealed and admitted as a precedent, they would have been slaves to all intents and purposes, as their whole property would lie at the mercy of the crown's minister and the minister's ministers, the House of Commons, who would find no end to the necessity of taxing these people, as every additional tax would furnish the means of adding to their respective wages. If the humors, which this accursed attempt has raised, are suffered to subside, the inherent affection which the colonies have for the mother country, and clashings of interest one with another, will throw everything back into the old channel; which indeed is the case already. But if another attack of the same nature should be made upon them, by a wicked, blundering minister, I will venture to prophesy, that this country will be shaken to its foundation in its wealth, credit, naval force, and interior population."

This letter was answered by the King on the 20th of March, 1768. The following extract, translated from the original, will show the views of his Polish Majesty respecting the dispute between England and her colonies.

"If it be true that the great Pitt has become an example of human weakness, this calamity gives me the same kind of regret that I should feel at the overthrow of St. Peter's Church by an earthquake, because it would be the destruction of a model of perfection or at

least of human excellence. As I have not received the pamphlets concerning the colonies, which you proposed to send to me, I would ask again why it is, that the right of sending representatives to the British Parliament is not accorded to the colonies? Representation and taxation would then go together, and the mother and daughters would be indissolubly united. Otherwise I see no alternative but oppression or complete independence. For the expedient of American Parliaments, or anything else of the kind, under whatsoever name it might be called, would only produce an opposition of interests between the colonies and England, as incompatible as it would be injurious to all parties.

"The English in America would then have the same relation to those of Europe, that exists in the seven United Provinces, which compose a federal republic, and whose government is so defective and slow in its operations, on account of the equality of power between the seven little republics respectively. The worst of all would be, that it should become necessary for the acts of the Parliament of England to be approved by an American Parliament before they can be executed in America, which would make the latter paramount to the former. This would be the same abuse that is now seen in Poland, where the Dietine of Prussia arrogates to itself the right of confirming or rejecting what the Diet of the kingdom of Poland has decreed."

These ideas, if not entirely adapted to the circumstances to which they refer, evince a liberal turn of mind and a due regard for the political rights of men.

Lee wrote a letter to another friend in Poland, from which may be gathered his opinions of some of the actors at that time prominent in the councils of the nation. It was written during the first months of the Duke of Grafton's administration.

"A formidable opposition," he says, "is expected, but the conjectures on its success are too vague to be attended to. Some men of weight and reputation are

embarked in it, but the heads are too odious to the nation in general, in my opinion, to carry their point; such as Bedford, Sandwich, Grenville, and, with submission, your friend Mansfield. He lately drew upon himself the laugh of the House of Lords, making use of the word *liberty* of the subject, and expressing great regard for it. It was called Satan preaching up sanctity. Conway is still Secretary of State, and much regarded as a man of ability and integrity. Lord Shelburne, the other secretary, has surpassed the opinion of the world; he speaks well, and is very distinct in office. The Duke of Grafton is an absolute orator, and has a fair character. An Irishman, one Mr. Burke, has sprung up in the House of Commons, who has astonished everybody with the power of his eloquence, and his comprehensive knowledge in all our exterior and interior politics and commercial interests. He wants nothing, but that sort of dignity annexed to rank and property in England, to make him the most considerable man in the lower house."

In writing to his correspondents in Poland, Lee could not forbear to make known the disappointment he had met with in his own country, and in his usual style of freedom, if not of rashness. His friend, Sir Thomas Wroughton, gave him salutary counsel on this point. He writes from Warsaw, April 29th, 1767, "I should have been heartily glad to hear, my dear Colonel, that his Majesty's recommendations had been more successful in procuring you an establishment equal to your merit and wishes; but I am not at all surprised that you find the door shut against you by a person who has such unbounded credit, as you have ever too freely indulged a liberty of declaiming, which many infamous and invidious people have not failed to inform him of. The principle, on which you thus freely speak your mind, is honest and patriotic, but not politic; and as it will not succeed in changing men or times, common prudence should teach us to hold our tongues, rather than to risk our own fortunes without any advantage



to ourselves or neighbors. Excuse this scrap of advice, and place it to the vent of a heart entirely devoted to your interest." Fortunate would it have been for Lee, to the last day of his life, if this advice had been heeded and followed.

What special claims he had to advancement, beyond those of other officers who had done their duty faithfully and bravely during the war, or whether he had been superseded by others of equal or lower rank, there are no means now of ascertaining. As the matter stands, it can scarcely be denied that he had a higher opinion of his claims, than his services and his just pretensions on this ground alone would naturally warrant. A better knowledge of the facts and his reasons, however, might exhibit the case under a different aspect.

After remaining about two years in England, suffering frequently from ill health, he formed the plan of passing the winter in the south of France and in the Island of Corsica, and of returning to Poland in the spring, with the further design of performing a campaign in the Russian service. "I flatter myself," said he, "that a little more practice will make me a good soldier. If not, it will serve to talk over my kitchen fire in my old age, which will soon come upon us all."

He left London in December, 1768, with this project in view; but on his arrival at Paris, he met Prince Czartorinsky, who prevailed on him to abandon his southern tour, and accompany him directly to Poland. They travelled by the way of Vienna, where they waited two or three weeks for an escort, the frontiers of Poland being overrun with armed parties of confederates. In a letter from Vienna, he says, "I am to have a command of Cossacks and Wallacks, a kind of people I have a good opinion of. I am determined not to serve in the line; one might as well be a churchwarden." He arrived at Warsaw early in the spring.



## CHAPTER III.

*Appointed a Major-General in the Polish Army.—Enters the Russian Service, and performs a Campaign against the Turks.—Travels through Hungary to Italy.—Returns to England by Way of Minorca and Gibraltar.*

It is not probable that Lee had any other object, in entering the Russian service, than that already mentioned, practice in his profession. As the campaign against the Turks did not open so soon as he expected, he continued for some time at Warsaw. His situation there is thus described in a letter to Lady Blake:

"This country is the reverse of ours. They have an honest, patriot King, but a vicious nation. Our station here, I mean those about the King's person, is whimsical enough. We have few troops, the bulk of these totally disaffected, and the town is full of 'confederates,' though not declared, far from being concealed. We have frequent alarms, and the pleasure of sleeping every night with our pistols on our pillows. I at present only wait for an opportunity to join the Russian army. This does not happen every day, as a strong escort is necessary, the communications being filled with banditti of robbers, who are the offals of the confederates. I believe it will be but a ridiculous campaign, something like that of Wilkes and Talbot. The Russians can gain nothing by beating their enemy, and the Turks are confoundly afraid."\*

To his friend, George Colman, he wrote, at the same time, "If I am defeated in my intention of joining the Russians, I think of passing through Hungary, and spending the ensuing winter in Italy, Sicily, or some of

\* In Langworthy's "Memoir of Charles Lee," this letter is said to have been addressed to Catharine Macaulay, the celebrated republican historian of England. But the editor of "Woodfall's Junius" informs us that it was written to Lady Blake, which indeed is sufficiently obvious from internal evidence. Lady Blake was sister to Sir Charles Bunbury, and first cousin to General Lee.

the islands in the Ægean Sea. As to England, I am resolved not to set my foot in it till the virtues, which I believe to exist in the body of the people, can be put into motion. I have good reasons for it. My spirits and temper were much affected by the measures which I was witness of, measures absolutely moderate, laudable, and virtuous, in comparison of what has been transacted since. To return solemn thanks to the crown for manifestly corrupt dissipation of its enormous revenues and impudent demand on the people, and, to repair this dissipation, to complete their own ruin, is pushing servility farther than the rascally senate of Tiberius was guilty of. In this light it is considered by all those I converse with, of every nation, even those who have the least idea of liberty. The Austrians and Russians hoot at us. In fine, it is looked upon as the *ultimatum* of human baseness, a *coup de grace* to our freedom and national honor."

This freak of ill humor, in regard to the public measures of his native country, is seasoned with a spice of wit. Alluding to the confederates, and their acts of violence, he says, "It is impossible to stir ten yards without an escort of Russians. The English are less secure than others, as they are esteemed the arch-enemies of the holy faith. A French comedian was the other day near being hanged, from the circumstance of his wearing a bob-wig, which, by the confederates, is supposed to be the uniform of the English nation. I wish to God the three branches of our legislature would take it into their heads to travel through the woods of Poland in bob-wigs."

His political bias is likewise strongly marked in a letter to Lord Thanet. Speaking of the opinions of those around him concerning the transactions in England, he adds, "Such is the language of these people; and it is fortunate for me that they are ignorant of our American politics. They can have no idea of our carrying our abominations so far as to disfranchise three millions of people of all the rights of men, for the

gratification of the revenge of a blundering, knavish Secretary, and a scoundrel Attorney-General, a Hillsborough and a Bernard. Were they informed of these facts, their opinion of us would be still more mortifying." After these specimens of his freedom of speech, we cannot wonder at the prudent counsel of his friend Wroughton.

In a letter to his sister, written two or three months later, at Warsaw, in the summer of 1769, he thus speaks of his situation and prospects. "I have been in this place three months, waiting for an opportunity to join the Russian army. A very safe one will now offer in ten or twelve days. The present ambassador is to join his regiment, and he will have a strong escort. I am, happily, very well acquainted with him, and believe I am a sort of favorite of his. He is a good sort of man, with wit, knowledge, and courage; in short, a man of that stamp whose friendship gives one credit and pleasure.

"The King received me with the cordiality and goodness which I expected from his noble and steady character. He treats me more like a brother than patron. This week he intends honoring me with the rank of Major-General. It is really an honor; for although, amongst the Poles, many indifferent subjects, from the nature of the government, arrive at a still higher rank, yet the foreigners who have obtained it have been men of unexceptionable character in the services in which they have been engaged. This testimony of so excellent a Prince's esteem flatters me extremely. He is indeed an excellent Prince. He is worthy of being the chief magistrate of a better nation. I know a nation that is worthy of a better chief magistrate than it possesses. Could they not make an exchange?"

The honor upon which he set so high a value was conferred upon him, according to the King's promise. He was raised to the rank of Major-General in the Polish army, with the pay and establishment suited to that rank while he should reside in Poland.

He left Warsaw, as he had proposed, with Prince Repnin, the Russian ambassador, and proceeded, with a strong guard, to the frontiers of Turkey. When they arrived at the Niester, however, the army had already crossed that river, and advanced two days' march into Moldavia. They overtook the army just in time to be engaged in a severe action between the hostile parties. While the Russians were marching through a ravine, their left wing, consisting of Cossacks and hussars, was attacked by fifty thousand Turkish cavalry, and driven back upon the infantry, who were thrown into confusion. They were rallied and formed with difficulty; but they stood their ground till reënforced by a second line of troops, who were stationed on the margin of the ravine.

After a sharp conflict, the Turks were at length forced to give way, and the Russians pushed forward to a more favorable position, where they formed an oblong square, to protect themselves against the furious assaults of the Turkish cavalry. These assaults were so warm and constant, that they were compelled to retreat, and to take post in a strong camp on the heights of Chotzim, near the city of that name. For some time they blockaded the city, and endeavored to batter down its walls; but their cannon were too small to effect this object; and, when the Grand Vizier arrived, with a hundred and seventy thousand men, and cut off their intercourse with the country, they were reduced to the inglorious necessity of abandoning the enterprise, and recrossing the Niester.\*

In a letter to the King of Poland, dated at Kami-niek, a town situate near the north bank of the Niester, opposite to Chotzim, Lee describes these operations, but bestows little praise on the address with which they had been conducted. They reflected little credit on the military genius or skill of the generals. The campaign had been useful to him, however, as adding to his knowledge and experience in the line of his profession.

\* Letter to Sir Charles Davers, December 24th, 1769.

For several months, he had been troubled with attacks of rheumatism, to which was now added a slow fever, brought on by bad diet and exposure in the army; and he determined to seek a restoration of his health, during the winter, in a milder climate. He proposed to try the waters of Buda, and crossed the Carpathian Mountains, on his route to that place; but he had scarcely entered Hungary, when he was seized with a violent fever, which compelled him to stop at a miserable village, where, for three weeks, his attendants despaired of his life. The strength of his constitution, however, sustained him till he was able to be removed to a more considerable town, where he obtained medical aid. Eighteen months afterwards, he speaks of still feeling the effects of his "Hungarian fever." Among his papers in a passport, dated at Cashau, in Hungary, November 29th, 1769, and signed "Esterhazy," commanding all persons to let him pass unmolested, and to assist him in the prosecution of his journey. He passed the winter at Vienna, mingling in a society to which he became much attached.

At the approach of spring, he travelled southward; and, in May, 1770, we find him at Florence, and two months afterwards at Leghorn. From this latter city, he wrote to a friend in Vienna, "I am making an experiment of sea-bathing, and I think it has done me considerable service. I shall try it some time longer, though not in this place, in which the relaxing society and conversation must certainly counteract the bracing qualities of the sea water. Why is not the sea at Vienna? Or, rather, why am I such a blockhead as not to suppose that a society which gave me such satisfaction must be better, both for my soul and body, though the water is fresh, than salt water with conversation *sine grano salis*? Believe me, I most sincerely regret my having left Vienna. I pay no compliment to it when I say I prefer it to all other places. I entreat you will assure the circle of our common friends of my idolatry for Vienna; I mean the families of

Herack, Schonbroun, and the Spanish ambassador. I cannot find terms to express my love and veneration for them. I must therefore beg you to assure them, that if they will encourage me by saying, through your channel, that they have not already had too much of me, I will pay them another visit, and that, perhaps, a very long one."

Whether he realized this anticipation is not known. He remained in Italy during the summer, and is reported to have been engaged in a duel with a foreign officer, in which his opponent was killed, and he received a wound that deprived him of the use of two of his fingers. From Florence, he wrote to Sir Charles Davers, that he should, perhaps, embark with the Russian fleet for the Morea, if his health would permit; but he relinquished that project. In the winter following, he passed over to Sicily and Malta, for the purpose, as he says, of invigorating his debilitated health and spirits by sea-bathing in the cold season. Near the end of March, 1770, he sailed from Leghorn to Minorca, and thence to Gibraltar and Cadiz. He mentions a design of passing the summer at Spa, for the benefit of the waters; but it is uncertain whether he carried it into execution. At all events, he was among his friends in England before the end of the year.

No evidence has been discovered of his again visiting Poland. The increasing disturbances in that ill fated country offered no field for action in the service of the King. It is pleasing to observe, however, that he retained to the last the same personal respect and affection for Stanislaus, that he expressed during the first months of their acquaintance.

## CHAPTER IV.

*His Sentiments and Writings on political Subjects.—A resolute Friend and Defender of Liberty.—The Authorship of the Letters of Junius ascribed to him.—Discussion of that Question.*

SINCE he could find no opportunity for his congenial pursuit of using his sword, he had the more leisure for wielding his pen. In his own country he entered with his accustomed warmth into the controversies of the day, and furnished frequent contributions to the public journals. The blunders, abuses, and corruption of ministers, in his opinion, supplied an exhaustless theme, and he was never weary with assailing their schemes and their measures. His high principles of liberty, and republican tendencies, appear in all his writings. "Mr. Burke seems to inculcate," he says, "that the salvation of this state is to be expected from the aristocratical part of the community; but I sincerely think nothing great is to be expected from that quarter." Sarcasm, irony, pungent invective, and a considerable share of wit, are characteristic marks of his compositions. The freedom of the press was a favorite topic, both in England and afterwards in America. He held that the characters of public men are public property, and that no station, however high, should screen their abuse of office, their follies and vices, from the lash of indignant reprobation. This sentiment he did not forbear to illustrate practically with an unsparing license.

His hostility to every kind of arbitrary government, and to whatsoever tends to foster the privileges of a few at the expense of the many, often appears. Among the works, which he regarded as peculiarly incorrect and unjust in their political character, was Hume's "History of the Stuarts." The coloring and deceptive tissues, with which that acute and ingenious writer had contributed to clothe the conduct and policy of the kings



of the Stuart race, and his plausible and disguised defence of slavish principles and tyrannical encroachments, were regarded by him as so many attacks upon the sacred rights of mankind, and as heaping reproaches upon the noble army of patriots, who had achieved the glorious revolution. In an ironical epistle, addressed to Hume himself, he mentions a project, which that work had suggested to him.

"I am so much in love with the scheme of your history," he observes, "I am so convinced that no task can be equally laudable in a philosopher, an historian, and a gentleman, as to endeavor to eradicate from the minds of our youth all prejudices and prepossessions against the memory of deceased and the character of living princes, and, by obviating the cavils and malice of republican writers, to inspire mankind with more candor in judging of the actions and government of sovereigns, that I am determined to follow so bright an example, and exert the utmost of my zeal, skill, and abilities (indeed far short of yours) to rescue from the unmerited odium under which they lie too much injured characters in history; I mean, the Emperor Claudius Cæsar, and his immediate successor, Nero, whose foibles and indiscretions have been swelled up into vices by the austerity and malevolence of Tacitus, Suetonius, and others, (the Rapins, Ludlows, and Macaulays, of those days,) who wrote under succeeding monarchs of different families. But, as the motives of such virulent proceedings are now ceased, and as men's minds ought to be a little cooler, we may venture to pronounce the disposition of those princes to have been good, though I do not think they were faultless, or altogether well advised."

He dilates upon the subject in a letter to a friend, from which it appears that he had a serious intention of undertaking such a task, and of showing, that, by adopting Hume's manner of representing the motives and acts of Charles and James, it would be easy to prove Claudius and Nero to have been virtuous princes, aiming only to exercise their prerogatives, and the power

intrusted to them by the constitution, for the good of their country. To what extent he prosecuted this design, his papers do not show.

He spent the spring and summer of 1772 in France and Switzerland, seeking a restoration of health by change of air and exercise. He rested two months at Dijon, and for some time at Lyons, and then proceeded to Lausanne for the purpose of consulting the celebrated physician Tissot. His chief complaints were rheumatism and gout; but his bodily frame was debilitated, and had recovered very slowly from the effects of the fever which brought him so low in Hungary. He complains that his spirits were variable, sometimes elastic and buoyant, at others depressed; and in this state of morbid feeling he is ready to believe, as he says in some of his letters, that his temper had altered for the worse. Indeed, he was ever frank and candid in confessing his defects. But, neither the energy nor fertility of his mind was diminished by the maladies of his body, and he employed himself during this tour in writing his remarks on Hume's History of England.

The dubious honor of the authorship of the Letters of JUNIUS has likewise been claimed for Charles Lee. This intimation was communicated to the public twenty years after his death, in a letter written by Mr. Thomas Rodney, of Delaware. In narrating a conversation, which he had with General Lee, in the year 1773, concerning these letters, Mr. Rodney speaks as follows:

"General Lee said there was not a man in the world, no, not even Woodfall, the publisher, that knew who the author was; that the secret rested wholly with himself, and forever would remain with him. Feeling in some degree surprised at this unexpected declaration, after pausing a little, I replied, 'No, General Lee, if you certainly know what you have affirmed, it can no longer remain solely with him; for certainly no one could know what you have affirmed but the author himself.' Recollecting himself, he replied, 'I have unguardedly committed myself, and it would be but folly

to deny to you that I am the author; but I must request you will not reveal it during my life; for it never was nor ever will be revealed by me to any other.' He then proceeded to mention several circumstances to verify his being the author, and, among them, that of his going over to the continent, and absenting himself from England the most of the time in which these letters were published in London. This he thought necessary, lest by some accident the author should become known, or at least suspected, which might have been his ruin." \*

Mr. Rodney moreover expresses his own belief, founded on this conversation, that Lee was the author of the letters. This circumstance, the highly respectable character of Mr. Rodney, and the positive nature of his testimony, produced a strong impression at the time on the minds of many persons, both in the United States and England. General Lee's reputation as a writer, a scholar, and a man of genius, the tone and character of some of his compositions, and his peculiar temper, were such as to afford a plausible groundwork for this opinion.

Public attention was soon drawn to the subject. Mr. Ralph Wormeley, of Virginia, who had known General Lee intimately during the latter years of his life, wrote a letter to Mr. Rodney, which was published, and in which he attempted to prove, that General Lee was so little acquainted with parliamentary history, and with the knowledge of other topics so ably discussed in the Letters of Junius, that he could not possibly have been the author.

Mr. Wormeley found an ardent and persevering opponent in Mr. Daniel Carthy, of North Carolina, who wrote a series of papers in the *Virginia Gazette*, aiming not only to confute Mr. Wormeley's argument, but to establish the position of Mr. Rodney by various

\* The letter from which this extract is taken was dated at Dover, February 1st, 1803. It was first published in the *Wilmington Mirror*, and in April of the same year it was copied into the *St. James's Chronicle*, London.

testimony drawn from the writings of General Lee, his education, political sentiments, and connections in society. Mr. Carthy likewise had the advantage of a personal acquaintance with General Lee, having served under him as an officer in the American war, and, from this intercourse, having conceived a warm attachment to him and high admiration of his talents.

A writer in England, Dr. Thomas Girdlestone, attracted to the subject by Mr. Rodney's letter, published a pamphlet on the same side of the question. He rested his argument mainly on parallel passages, selected from the Letters of Junius and the writings of General Lee contained in the *Memoirs* published by Mr. Langworthy. The force of this argument being admitted, there was, however, a grave difficulty in the way, which Dr. Girdlestone was much embarrassed in removing.

It appeared, from the dates of some of Lee's papers, that he was not in England, but in a remote part of the continent, during the publication of the larger portion of Junius's Letters, and it was well known that Junius, whoever he was, must have been constantly in London, or in the neighborhood of that city. To overcome this difficulty, it was necessary for Dr. Girdlestone to assume, that Lee purposely dated from a distant place his letters to some of his friends, who were in the secret, and who might show these letters, to prevent suspicion. The erroneous dates prefixed to many of Lee's printed letters gave countenance to this hypothesis. But, after all, the thread was too slender to hold the argument together, without a strong additional force, which Dr. Girdlestone could not command. He was more successful in meeting the objection of the many inconsistencies between the writings of Lee and Junius. To this he replied, correctly, that these inconsistencies are not greater than those in the writings of Junius himself, as exhibited in his different letters.

But there is no occasion to enlarge on this subject. The first letter of Junius is dated in January, 1769, and the last in January, 1772. From the manuscript papers

of General Lee, it is certain that he was in Warsaw early in the year 1769, that he remained there during the summer, that he joined the Russian army in the campaign against the Turks in the autumn, that he passed the following winter at Vienna, and the summer of 1770 in Italy. These facts are proved by the dates in his private diary, recorded in his own handwriting. Within the above period, more than half the letters of Junius were published, and some of them in such quick succession, and relating so exclusively to local events, that they could not have been written by any person absent from England.\*

It may then be asked, What is to be thought of Mr. Rodney's letter? The reader must judge. His own veracity is not to be questioned. He may have misunderstood General Lee's meaning, or have drawn a false inference from language that was left purposely ambiguous. General Lee's vanity might, perhaps, carry him so far. But the misconception may be explained in a different manner. It is well known that General Lee was a frequent contributor to the newspapers when he was in London, and engaged eagerly in the political controversies of the day. It is certainly possible, and even probable, that, after he returned to England, during the last year of the correspondence of Junius, he entered, among others, into the contest with that brilliant writer, by anonymous communications to the public journals. In his conversation with Mr. Rodney, he may have alluded to this literary warfare in such a manner as to connect himself with Junius, without absolutely intending to convey the impression of identity. This is no more than conjecture, however, and the reader must form his own opinion.

Whatever fortunes may have befallen General Lee during his travels, and in England, he seems neither to

\* Dr. Girdlestone's pamphlet was published in 1807. It was followed by another edition, much enlarged, in 1813. The subject is discussed in the Preliminary Essay to "Woodfall's Junius," but the editor relies on the false dates contained in Langworthy's Memoir. See also the "British Critic" for September, 1807.

have changed his opinions, nor to have become reconciled to the policy of the ministers in regard to the colonies, or to the measures adopted by them for carrying out that policy. The high principles of political freedom, which he had openly avowed in his early years, were, in this instance, fortified by a conviction of right and a sense of justice. Such were his constant declarations, and there is surely no reason for doubting his sincerity, since these declarations conflicted with his personal interests, and thwarted all ambitious hopes, by interposing a bar to any promotion he might otherwise have expected under the auspices of the government. At length he became identified in principle with the American cause, and he resolved to make a tour through the colonies, whether with the design of establishing himself permanently in the country, or only of gratifying his curiosity by observation, it would be in vain now to inquire. It is probable, however, that, in case of a war, he had already determined what part he should act.

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## CHAPTER V.

*Arrives in America.—Travels in the Middle and Eastern Provinces.—Letters to General Gage and Lord Percy.—In Philadelphia at the Sitting of the first Continental Congress.—Dr. Myles Cooper's Pamphlet.—Lee's Answer.—His Account of the political State of the Colonies.—Embraces with Ardor the Cause of the Americans.—Visits Maryland and Virginia.—Purchases an Estate in Virginia.*

GENERAL LEE arrived in New York, from London, on the 10th of November, 1773. His old enemy, the gout, with which he was often afflicted, kept him a prisoner for some time after he landed; but, as soon as he was sufficiently recovered, he began his travels to the southward. He made no secret of his sentiments



or wishes in New York. "Your old acquaintance, General Lee," says Mr. Thomas Gamble, in a letter written from that place to General Bradstreet, "has lived with me for a month; more abusive than ever, and the greatest son of liberty in America. He has now gone to Maryland, to see Mr. Dulany. He extols the Bostonians, and wishes the rest of the colonies would follow their example."

After leaving New York, he passed five or six months in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, seeking everywhere the society of the political leaders, and attracting much attention by the zeal with which he espoused the cause of the Americans, his eloquent and fervid discourse, and the romantic renown which he had acquired by his European wanderings and military experience. The eccentricity of his manners, which led him sometimes to infringe upon the recognized rules of social intercourse, was regarded as the natural fruit of a brilliant though erratic genius; and his political principles were in such perfect accordance with the spirit of the times, and were poured into the ears of every listener with so much earnestness and ability, that he soon won the hearts of the people, and gained the confidence of all the prominent patriots.

During the summer of 1774, he travelled through the middle and eastern colonies, as far as Boston. At this time, General Gage was in that city, as Governor of Massachusetts, and at the head of a British army. Although a friendship had long subsisted between him and General Lee, yet the latter purposely forbore to call upon him, or to show him any marks of personal respect. His reasons are assigned in a characteristic letter to General Gage

"Whether it is from a cynical disposition," he writes, "or a laudable misanthropy, whether it is to my credit or discredit, I know not; but it is most certain that I have had a real affection for very few men; but that these few I have loved with warmth, zeal, and ardor. You, Sir, amongst these few, have ever held one of the



foremost places. I respected your understanding, liked your manners, and perfectly adored the qualities of your heart. These, Sir, are my reasons, paradoxical as they may appear to you, that I now avoid what I heretofore should have thought a happiness. Were you personally indifferent to me, I should, perhaps, from curiosity, appear in the circle of your levee; but I hold in such abhorrence the conduct, temper, and spirit, of our present court, more particularly their present diabolical measures with respect to this country fill me with so much horror and indignation, that I cannot bear to see a man, from whom my affections can never be weaned, in the capacity of one of their instruments; as I am convinced that the court of Tiberius, or Philip the Second, was not more treacherous to the rights of mankind than the present court of Great Britain.

"I know not whether the people of America will be successful in their struggles for liberty; I think it most probable they will, from what I have seen in my progress through the colonies. So noble a spirit pervades all orders of men, from the first estated gentleman to the lowest planters, that I think they must be victorious. I most devoutly wish they may; for, if the machinations of their enemies prevail, the bright goddess of liberty must, like her sister Austrea, utterly abandon the earth, and leave not a wreck behind.

"I know, Sir, you will do me the justice to believe that I am not acting a part; that no affectation has place in my conduct. You have known me long enough, I flatter myself, to be persuaded that zeal for the liberties of my country and the rights of mankind has been my predominant passion." \*

\* At the beginning of the previous war, Gage had been Lieutenant-Colonel of the forty-fourth regiment, in which Lee had served as captain. A few weeks before the date of the above letter, Gates wrote to Lee as follows: "Unless actions convince me to the contrary, I am resolved to think Mr. Gage has some secret medicine in his pocket to heal the wounds that threaten the life of American liberty. Surely a man so humane, so sensible, so honorable, so independent in his circumstances, and so great from family expectations, would never undertake a business fit only for an abandoned desperado, or a monster in human shape. I have read with wonder and astonishment Gage's

In a letter written at the same time to Lord Percy, who was then stationed at Boston as an officer in the army, he expresses similar sentiments, and with equal freedom.

"Were the principle of taxing America without her consent admitted," he says, "Great Britain would that instant be ruined; the pecuniary influence of the crown, and the army of placemen and pensioners, would be so increased, that all opposition to the most iniquitous measures of the most iniquitous ministers would be forever borne down. Your Lordship, I am sure, must be sensible that this pecuniary influence is enormously too great, and that a very wicked use is made of it. On these principles, every good Englishman, abstracted from any particular regard for America, must oppose her being taxed by the Parliament of Great Britain, or, more properly, by the First Lord of the Treasury; for, in fact, the Parliament and Treasury have of late years been one and the same thing.

"But, my Lord, I have besides a particular regard for America. I was long among them, and I know them to be the most loyal, affectionate, zealous subjects of the whole empire. General Gage himself must acknowledge the truth of what I advance. He was a witness, through the whole course of the last war, of their zeal, their ardor, their enthusiasm, for whatever concerned the welfare, the interest, and the honor, of the mother country.

"I think, my Lord, an English soldier owes a very great degree of reverence to the King, as first magistrate and third branch of the legislature, called to this

proclamations. Surely this is not the same man you and I knew so well in days of yore." Again, a month later: "Be careful how you act, for be assured Gage knows you too well, and knows you knew him too well, not to be glad of any plausible pretence to prevent your good services in the public cause." At this time Gates was residing in Berkeley County, Virginia, west of the Blue Ridge, having left the army, and purchased a plantation there, after the peace of 1763. He had been in the disastrous expedition under General Braddock, in 1755, as captain of an independent company; and, in the same expedition, Gage was Lieutenant-Colonel of the forty-fourth regiment. They were both wounded in the battle of the Monongahela, where Washington acted as aid-de-camp to the commander.

mighty station by the voice of the people; but I think he owes a still greater degree of reverence to the rights and liberties of his country. I think his country is every part of the empire; that, in whatever part of the empire a flagitious minister manifestly invades those rights and liberties, whether in Great Britain, Ireland, or America, every Englishman, soldier or not soldier, ought to consider their cause as his own; and that the rights and liberties of this country are invaded, every man must see who has eyes, and is not determined to keep them shut." \*

Having made a rapid tour through the eastern colonies, Lee returned to Philadelphia in season to be present while the first Continental Congress was sitting in that city. He thus had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the members of that body, consisting of men from all parts of the country eminent for their talents and patriotism, convened to deliberate on public affairs, and to devise measures for obtaining a redress of grievances; men of whom Chatham said, in Parliament, "I must declare and avow, that, in the master states of the world, for solidity of reasoning, force of sagacity, and wisdom of conclusion, under such a complication of difficult circumstances, no nation or body of men can stand in preference to the General Congress at Philadelphia." † The enthusiasm of Lee, the heartiness with which he approved their proceedings and animated their zeal, his intelligence and ability, his decision and boldness, were suited to the moment, and all conspired to make a strong impression on the members of this Congress, and to prepare the way for future proofs of their confidence in so able and ardent a champion of their cause.

He had other claims, also, to their notice and consideration. In the midst of his wanderings, he had

\* This letter to Lord Percy was published in London a few months after it was written. It is contained in Almon's *Remembrancer* for 1775. The letter to Gage was not printed till many years afterwards, and it first appeared in America.

† Life of the Earl of Chatham, Vol. II., p. 404.

found leisure to employ his pen. His performances in this way were published anonymously ; but their style, tone, and matter, betrayed their origin, which he probably took no pains to conceal. He was not a man to hide his light under a bushel, or to shrink from an avowal of his sentiments on all subjects before the tribunal of the public. Precipitate, sometimes rash, he certainly was ; but this fault cannot be charged with selfish ends ; it was the excess of a bold, frank, and fearless spirit. Timidity seeks disguise ; selfishness works by cunning, craft, low intrigue, and pitiful appliances. With these stains the character of Lee was never tarnished. He uttered his opinions with manly freedom and self-confidence, and he was resolute in defending them. His writings in favor of American liberty, at this time, partake of these characteristics ; and, as compositions suited to the occasion, they have the additional merit of carrying conviction to the reader's mind, that they flowed equally from the head and the heart, pleading for justice and the rights of humanity.

Dr. Myles Cooper, of New York, a clergyman of the Church of England, had written a pamphlet entitled "A Friendly Address to all Reasonable Americans," in which the author entered into an elaborate defence of all the acts and all the claims of the British government in their proceedings towards the colonies. He was amazed only that the colonists should be so blind, weak, and obstinate, as not to see and confess, with humble submission, the lenity, forbearance, and parental kindness of their venerated mother, in her numerous acts of grace and condescension to her deluded children, who were now rushing headlong to their ruin. He argued from law, precedent, the prerogatives of the King, and the constitutional power of Parliament, as if he had been a great luminary in Westminster Hall ; and the result of the whole was the old doctrine of passive obedience. Charles the First would have rewarded with a mitre so sturdy an advocate.

He discovered that Locke's reasonings on the subject

of taxation were "weak and sophistical;" and he affirmed, that the tax on tea was no hardship, because the Americans were not obliged to buy the tea. Nor was the learned author content to rely on his logic and legal precedents alone. He must needs speak of military affairs, of the formidable armies of Great Britain, the skill and bravery of her generals, the experience of her veteran troops, and then contrast these with the undisciplined yeomanry of America, the want of generals, the want of military supplies, the want of everything that could give consistency or strength to an army. In short, no arguments were spared which could throw discredit upon the principles avowed by the colonists, reproach upon their acts, and odium upon their cause.

This pamphlet fell into the hands of General Lee. The cool effrontery and magisterial manner of the author in discussing important topics, of which he had no adequate knowledge, his utter hostility, in all points, to what the patriots deemed their sacred rights, and the slavish doctrines he maintained, naturally exposed him to severe and caustic attacks from his opponents. As a scholar and divine, Dr. Cooper stood high with his party, who adopted him as a champion in the political field, for which he was ill qualified. Lee's reply is marked with the peculiarities of his other compositions. Sallies of humor, irony, and glowing declamation, are mingled with grave argument, facts, and apposite illustrations. The author's political disquisitions he despatches very briefly, as the reveries of a mind so imperfectly informed, or so deeply enveloped in the mists of prejudice, as not to require a serious refutation. He merely exposes them in their native deformity. His main battery is opened upon Dr. Cooper's military speculations, which he thought more likely to mislead the public; and here, standing on his own ground, he speaks with authority and effect, drawing a parallel between the armies which England could bring across the Atlantic and those which could be raised on the soil of America, both as to numbers and efficiency, much to the

advantage of the latter, consisting of the yeomanry of the land, called out by the impulse of patriotism, and fighting for their firesides and their liberties.

This performance was well timed, well adapted to its object, and was received with great applause throughout the country. It unquestionably produced a strong impulse upon public opinion, and especially in confirming the wavering confidence of those, who had distrusted the ability of the colonies to contend with the armies of England. One edition after another issued from the press; it was circulated widely, and read with avidity by all classes of people; and it soon raised its author to a high pitch of popularity. His genius, education, experience, military knowledge, and enthusiastic devotion to the cause of the colonists, were recommendations which were fully recognized, and in which was seen the promise of an able and resolute coadjutor.\*

The impressions which Lee had received, after a residence of ten months in the country, are conveyed in a letter to Sir Charles Davers, dated at Philadelphia, while the first Congress was in session.

"I have now lately run through the colonies from Virginia to Boston, and can assure you, by all that is solemn and sacred, that there is not a man on the whole continent, placemen and some High Churchmen excepted, who is not determined to sacrifice his property, his life, his wife, family, children, in the cause of Boston, which he justly considers as his own.

"In every town in New England are formed companies of cadets, who are as perfect as possible in the manual exercise, evolutions, and all the minute manoeuvres practised by the troops of Europe. The Boston company of artillery is allowed to be equal to any; so

\* The tract was called *Strictures on a Pamphlet entitled A Friendly Address to all Reasonable Americans*, and was published in 1774. It is uncertain where it was first printed, but probably in Philadelphia. It was reprinted in New York, New London, and Boston, in a cheap form, for general circulation, and it was likewise inserted in some of the newspapers. In a bitter philippic by a Tory writer, under the title of *The General attacked by a Subaltern*, it is called a "boasted bulwark of faction," and the Whigs are abused for their active zeal in spreading it among the people.



that, in reality, they have drill officers sufficient to form an army of sixty thousand men; and this number the four provinces can maintain, without neglecting the culture of their lands. I leave you to judge whether it is easy to dragoon this number, even if the other colonies should stand aloof. But they will not stand aloof. They will support them with their blood and treasure. The Canadians, it seems, are to be employed against them; but if a single man stirs, they are determined to invite France and Spain to accept the prodigious profits which their commerce affords. They want nothing in return but arms, ammunition, and perhaps a few artillery officers as well as guns. And they certainly are to be justified by every law, human and divine. You will ask, where they will find generals. But I will ask, what generals have their tyrants? In fact, the match in this respect will be pretty equal."

With this extreme freedom in avowing his sentiments, and with the undisguised manner in which he took the part of the Americans, it is no wonder that his opinions, and reports of his conduct, should come to the ears of the ministers. He was an officer on half-pay in the King's service, and, standing in this position, he might naturally be required to forbear enlisting himself in the ranks of those, who were planning schemes for resisting the ministerial measures. Accordingly, on the 17th of October, Lord Dartmouth wrote to General Gage, informing him of the intelligence he had received concerning Lee, who, he was told, associated with the enemies of government in Boston, and encouraged a spirit of revolt. "Have an attention to his conduct," says the minister, "and take every legal method to prevent his effecting any of those dangerous purposes he is said to have in view." It does not appear that General Gage was the author of this report, although in a letter to Lord Dartmouth, written a few days after Lee left Boston, he said, "It has been suggested that it was highly necessary to apprehend a certain number of persons, which, I believe, would have been a very proper



measure some time ago, but at present it would be the signal for hostilities, which they seem very ripe to begin." This step was subsequently urged by the ministers; but Adams and Hancock were the only individuals whose offences were declared to be of so flagitious a nature, as to drive them beyond the limits of his Majesty's pardon.

Lee remained in Philadelphia while the first Congress was sitting, and then went to Virginia and Maryland. In December, a convention of deputies from the several counties of Maryland met at Annapolis, to approve the proceedings of the Continental Congress, and to deliberate on public affairs. Lee was present at the meeting of this convention, and his counsels had much weight in stirring up the members to vigorous action, and particularly to adopt resolutions for putting the militia on a better footing, forming them into new companies and regiments, and supplying them with arms and ammunition. A plan for the new organization was furnished by him, and he personally superintended the arrangements for mustering the companies at Annapolis. He was delighted with the promptness and spirit shown by the Maryland convention, and exultingly contrasted its proceedings with what he called a "trick of adjourning and procrastinating" in some of the other provinces. At this same convention a lively sympathy was expressed for the suffering inhabitants of Boston, then deprived of their usual means of subsistence by the oppressive act of Parliament for closing the port; and the people of all the counties were requested to furnish contributions for their relief.

While at Annapolis, he wrote a long letter to Edmund Burke. After describing the condition of the country, the political views and temper of the people, and their military preparations and resources, he adds,

"I shall now trouble you with a few words respecting myself. I find it inserted in a paragraph of an English newspaper, that a certain officer (meaning me) had been

busy in dissuading the people of Boston from submitting to the acts. It is giving me great importance to suppose that I have influence to urge or restrain so vast a community in affairs of the dearest moment. The same paragraph adds that I had offered to put myself at their head ; but I hope it will not be believed that I was capable of so much temerity and vanity. To think myself qualified for the most important charge that ever was committed to mortal man, is the last stage of presumption. Nor do I think the Americans would or ought to confide in a man, let his qualifications be ever so great, who has no property among them. It is true, I most devoutly wish them success in the glorious struggle ; that I have expressed my wishes both in writing and *viva voce* ; but my errand to Boston was mere curiosity to see a people in so singular circumstances ; and I had likewise an ambition to be acquainted with some of their leading men ; with them only I associated during my stay at Boston. Our ingenious gentlemen in the camp, therefore, very naturally concluded my design was to put myself at their head."\*

About this time he made a visit to his friend Gates at his residence in Berkeley county. Gates had advised him to purchase an estate, then on sale in his neighborhood, which he described as an excellent farm, consisting of two thousand four hundred acres of land. This farm, he said, could be purchased for three thousand six hundred pounds sterling, and at this price he thought it a great bargain. In ten years, with proper management, it would be worth seven thousand pounds, besides yielding a liberal income annually in the mean time. Eighteen hundred pounds were required to be paid down, and the remainder by easy instalments. One thousand pounds would be necessary to provide stock for the farm, and to carry forward the improvements. Lee made the purchase, by which it would seem that he had already resolved to establish his home in America. This estate became the place of his future residence, ex-

\* Burke's Correspondence, Vol. I., p. 514.

cept when employed in the public service, till the time of his death.

Hitherto, General Lee had been continually gaining upon the affections and confidence of the Americans. On all occasions he was among the foremost in pressing vigorous measures and decided action. His enthusiasm was contagious, enforced as it was by commanding talents, and an earnestness which produced an entire conviction of his sincerity. His four campaigns in America had enabled him not only to understand the condition of the colonists, their political institutions and principles, but to study their character and habits; and thus he was qualified to adapt himself with remarkable facility to the circumstances in which he was now placed. It was not strange, therefore, that, as the time approached when all men saw that a resort to arms was inevitable, the public eye should be turned to him as one of the most prominent candidates for a high command in the service.

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## CHAPTER VI.

*Lee appointed Major-General in the American Army.—Proceeds with Washington to the Camp at Cambridge.—His Reception by the Massachusetts Congress.—Correspondence with General Burgoyne.—Assists in reorganizing the Army.—Goes to Newport.—Administers an Oath to the Tories.*

THE memorable day at Lexington and Concord kindled the indignation and roused the martial spirit of the whole people. The events of that day had an electrical effect throughout New England. The blood of American citizens had been shed on their native soil. Men flew to their arms, and thousands hurried to the scene of action as if driven onward by a common impulse. When the British troops retreated from Lexington, they found an asylum in Boston, where the

whole British force was stationed, under General Gage. Within a few days, Boston was surrounded by the militia of New England, under the command of General Ward.

The second Congress assembled at Philadelphia, and one of their first acts was to take into consideration the particulars of the affair at Lexington. At this time, very few persons in the country expected a war; yet it was evident to all, that, after what had passed, a resort to arms was necessary, if they intended to vindicate the principles and secure the rights for which they had so long contended by petitions, resolves, and public declarations. Congress therefore immediately determined to assume the attitude of military defence, and to embody a Continental army, which was to be raised and supported at the common charge of the nation.

As a preliminary step, it was requisite that officers should be appointed to command the new army. Considering the relations in which the several colonies then stood to each other, and the circumstance that General Ward already commanded the New England army stationed around Boston, the task of selection was delicate. By a spirit of compromise, however, and by a wise policy on political grounds, the difficulties were in a great degree removed, and Washington was unanimously chosen Commander-in-chief. General Ward's position so clearly pointed him out for the next place in rank, that he was accordingly elected the first Major-General. Charles Lee followed him, and, on the 17th of June, 1775, was appointed second Major-General in the Continental army. Two other Major-Generals only were appointed at that time, namely, Schuyler and Putnam; the last being the only one of the four who received the unanimous voice of Congress.

There seems little room to doubt, that Lee had at one time flattered himself with the hope of being preferred to the chief command; and probably there were persons in the country who had encouraged this hope. His military experience and eminent qualities were

captivating to the multitude. But his foreign origin interposed an effectual bar to such an advancement, and it is not likely that any member of Congress entertained the thought for a moment. It is impossible that a single considerate American could have been willing to repose so responsible a trust in any other hands than those of a citizen born in the country. If Lee was not content with this result, there is no evidence of his having openly expressed dissatisfaction. On the contrary, he manifested a warm attachment to Washington, and coöperated for some time cordially in executing his plans; but occasional symptoms may be seen of his uneasiness at the superior rank of General Ward.\*

Before General Lee accepted a post in the American army, he wrote to Lord Barrington, Secretary at War in Great Britain, resigning the commission which he held in his Majesty's service; declaring, at the same time, that, whenever his Majesty should call him to act

\* The correspondence of the day furnishes a good index to the rumors that were afloat, and in some degree to the state of public opinion. The following extract is from a letter written by an unknown person in Philadelphia, December 26th, 1774, to a member of the British Parliament.

"The only design of this letter is to rectify some mistakes, which have been transmitted to England, respecting the conduct of General Lee, who is now in America.

"The ministry have been made to believe, that the military preparations in the colonies have been recommended and taught entirely by that officer. Nothing can be further from fact. The Americans were determined to seal their love of liberty with their blood long before they heard of the name of General Lee. The people of Massachusetts were armed and disciplined before General Lee visited them, and the Congress agreed to recommend the study of the military exercises to the colonies without hearing a word on the subject from the General. It is a falsehood that he has offered to head our troops. He has too much knowledge of the world not to perceive that men, who fight for all they hold dear to them, will prefer men born among them for commanders to the most experienced foreign officers. Moreover, the colonies are not so wrapped up in General Lee's military accomplishments, as to give him the preference to Colonel Putnam and Colonel Washington; men whose military talents and achievements have placed them at the head of American heroes. There are several hundred thousand Americans, who would face any danger with these illustrious heroes to lead them. It is but just to General Lee's merit to acknowledge, that he has upon all occasions exposed the folly and madness of the present administration, and has shown the most tender regard to the liberties of this country." ALMON'S *Remembrancer*, Vol. I., p. 9.

Another contemporary writer says, that General Lee "expected to be unanimously chosen to the elevated station of the supreme command." EDDIS'S *Letters*, p. 237. But there is no evidence, that this writer knew what General Lee expected, and his declaration is only a proof that such an idea was in the minds of some of the people.

against the enemies of his country, or in defence of his just rights and dignity, no man would obey the summons with more alacrity and zeal. He condemned, in strong language, the ministerial measures against the colonies, "which he thought himself obliged in conscience, as a citizen, an Englishman, and a soldier of a free state, to exert his utmost to defeat."

In accepting his new commission, he made sacrifices, or at least exposed himself to hazards, which he afterwards found occasion to enumerate, and which may be stated in this place.

His property then consisted of an annual income of four hundred and eighty pounds sterling on a mortgage in Jamaica, and of two hundred pounds on an estate in Middlesex; one thousand pounds in the stock of a county turnpike secured at four per cent; fifteen hundred pounds on bonds at five per cent; his half-pay, one hundred and thirty pounds; and in his agent's hands twelve hundred pounds more; so that his whole annual income was about nine hundred and forty pounds. He possessed likewise ten thousand acres of land in the Island of St. John, with improvements which had cost him nearly eight hundred pounds; a mandamus for twenty thousand acres in East Florida; and a claim, as an officer who had served in America during the last war, for other lands on the Ohio, Mississippi, or in West Florida. Moreover, whenever he should choose to reside in Poland, he would receive, as aid-de-camp to the King, a salary of eight hundred ducats, besides the expenses of living suitable to that rank. "Such," he says, "were the fortune and income, which I staked on the die of American liberty; and I played a losing game, for I might lose all, and had no prospect or wish to better it."

This property was in the control of the British government, and, under the circumstances of Lee's defection from the royal cause, reasonable apprehensions might certainly have been entertained that it would be confiscated; yet, in the exuberance of his zeal, he ran



the risk. It should be observed, however, that, although he did not stipulate for any indemnification, he nevertheless had a conference with a committee of Congress before he accepted his commission, and laid before them an estimate of his property. In consequence of the report of this committee, it was resolved, as recorded in the Secret Journal, that the colonies should indemnify General Lee for any loss of property he might sustain by entering into their service.

He was in Philadelphia at the time of his appointment by Congress, and was thus prepared to accompany General Washington to the headquarters of the army, then at Cambridge. They began their journey without delay, and were escorted by a volunteer troop of light-horse as far as New York. While on their route, they heard the intelligence of the battle of Bunker's Hill. The Provincial Congress of Massachusetts was at this time sitting at Watertown, and provision was made for receiving the two Generals in a suitable manner, with public tokens of respect for their character and rank. A committee of the Congress repaired to Springfield, with direction to await the arrival of the Generals, and accompany them to Watertown. They were escorted from place to place by successive troops of horse, and were everywhere greeted with demonstrations of joy by the people.

On the 2d of July they reached Watertown, and General Washington was saluted by the Congress with a congratulatory address, to which he responded in appropriate terms. A separate address, similar in its tone, was likewise presented to General Lee. The estimation in which his merits were held by these legislators of Massachusetts, and the benefits they expected from his services, are forcibly expressed. After announcing their "satisfaction and gratitude" at his appointment, they go on to say, "We admire and respect the character of a man, who, disregarding the allurements of profit and distinction his merit might procure, engages in the cause of mankind, in defence



of the injured, and relief of the oppressed. From your character, from your great abilities and military experience, united with those of the Commander-in-chief, under the smiles of Providence, we flatter ourselves with the prospect of discipline and order, success and victory." This language is explicit; and, in fact, the attentions and marks of public respect proffered to him, at the time of his joining the army, were little short of those bestowed upon Washington himself. They furnish a proof of the extraordinary confidence with which he was regarded, and of the high position he occupied in the favorable opinion of the country.

A few days before General Lee accepted his commission in the American army, he wrote a letter to his friend General Burgoyne, then lately arrived in Boston. The reader will remember the campaign, which they performed together in Portugal thirteen years before, and in which they both gained applause. Burgoyne came out to take a command in the army under General Gage. This opportunity was seized by Lee to expostulate with his friend on the part he was acting against the colonies, or, in other words, against what he regarded the sacred cause of liberty and right.

"I most devoutly wish," said he, "that your industry, valor, and military talents, may be reserved for a more honorable and virtuous service, against the natural enemies of your country, and not to be wasted in ineffectual attempts to reduce to the wretchedest state of servitude the most meritorious part of your fellow-subjects. I say, Sir, that any attempts to accomplish this service must be ineffectual. You cannot possibly succeed. No man is better acquainted with the state of this country than myself. I have run through almost the whole colonies from the north to the south, and from the south to the north. I have conversed with all orders of men, and can assure you that the same spirit animates the whole."

He is surprised that such men as Burgoyne and Howe should be willing to become the instruments of

oppression in executing schemes so hostile to the free spirit of the British constitution, to every generous principle, to every noble virtue, and every sentiment of justice. He assails the ministry with his usual acrimony, assigns no better motives for their conduct than "despotism" and "vengeance," and declares his unalterable determination to join heart and hand with the Americans, in resisting these tyrannical encroachments upon their liberties. Before he sent this letter, he had the precaution to read it to several members of the Continental Congress.

These sallies of zeal and of indignant charges upon the ministry were taken in good part by General Burgoyne, who understood the head and the heart, the temper and principles, the eccentric humors and chivalrous enthusiasm of the man from whom they emanated. Six days after the arrival of the American Generals in camp, a trumpeter was sent out from Boston with an answer to the above letter. General Burgoyne recognizes the bond of friendship, and regrets that the vicissitude of human affairs should place them in any sense in the attitude of foes. He claims respect for his opinions, however, and the right of being guided by them in his conduct, and then explains his sentiments on the great points at issue between the two countries, and declares his unqualified approbation of the measures pursued by the ministers.

He argues the matter coolly, and touches upon the prominent topics, but with little novelty in argument or illustration. The weight of his reasonings rests on the pivot of parliamentary supremacy; but, like all other reasoners on that side of the question, he overlooks the inevitable consequence, that this supremacy, carried to the length contended for, would authorize the Parliament to do wrong as well as right, and to compel submission equally to both, without any means of redress on the part of a people not represented. Against this monstrous doctrine the colonists took up arms, and demanded the privilege of judging for them-

selves when their liberties and property were invaded by a power claiming to be supreme, over which they had no control by representation or influence.

In conclusion, the writer solicited an amicable interview with his friend, flattering himself that such an interview might in its consequences tend to peace, and to the restoring to their senses "the unhappy deluded bulk of this country, who foresee not the distress that is impending." He proposed a meeting on Boston Neck, within the British lines, and requested his correspondent to name the day and hour, pledging his parole of honor for General Lee's safe return.

This proposal involved considerations of too much delicacy to be precipitately accepted. No one doubted his attachment to the American cause; yet, being a foreigner, and recently in his Majesty's service, his holding conferences with British officers, within the enemy's lines, however pure and praiseworthy his motives, would naturally excite suspicions, and could hardly fail to be construed to his disadvantage. This view of the subject doubtless struck his mind, and prompted the resolution, so seldom taken by him, of calling the virtue of prudence to his aid. He sent the letter to the Provincial Congress, and requested their advice, expressing his wish, at the same time, that, if the proposed interview should be approved, they would delegate one of their body to attend him, and hear what should pass at the conference.

The subject was duly considered by the Congress, who replied, that, having the "highest confidence in the wisdom, discretion, and integrity, of General Lee," they could have no objection to the interview on this score; but they doubted its policy, and feared it would lead to unfavorable constructions of his motives and conduct, and thereby lessen the influence which it was important for him to maintain in his present station. They left the affair to his own judgment, however, and appointed Mr. Gerry to attend him, in case he should accede to the proposal. The question was likewise

submitted to a council of officers in the army, who gave similar advice, and the project was abandoned. General Lee declined the proposal in a complimentary note to General Burgoyne.

For several days after their arrival in Cambridge, the two Generals, with their military families, occupied the same house, one room being reserved for the use of the President of the Provincial Congress. This house was provided and furnished at the public charge, and continued to be the head-quarters of General Washington till after the evacuation of Boston. As soon as the army was arranged, however, and the Continental commissions were distributed, General Lee took command of the left wing, his head-quarters being at Winter Hill, near Mystic River, in full view of the British works on Bunker's Hill. The right wing, at Roxbury, was commanded by General Ward; the centre, at Cambridge, by General Putnam.

As no active operations of importance occurred during the season, the principal attention was directed to constructing fortifications, tactics, and discipline. In all these duties, and in his cordial coöperation with the Commander-in-chief, General Lee fully sustained his high reputation as an officer, and continued to establish himself more and more firmly in the confidence of the public. His knowledge and experience in military affairs were turned to good account, when the commissioners from the Continental Congress came to the camp, empowered and instructed to unite with General Washington in devising a plan for reorganizing the army, and placing it on a permanent foundation. His influence was also exerted to assuage the discontents which existed among some of the general officers, on the ground of the rank assigned to them by the Continental Congress, and to persuade them to accept their commissions, and allow their personal feelings to be controlled by the higher principles of patriotism and public duty. On these points, his arguments and appeals flowed from a liberal spirit and mature judgment, and they were not without salutary effects.

About the middle of December, intelligence was brought from Boston to General Washington, that preparations were making to send off a body of troops by water, under General Clinton. It was naturally inferred, that this expedition was destined to the southward, possibly to Rhode Island or New York. Despatches were immediately forwarded to the authorities of those places, to put them on their guard. Governor Cooke, of Rhode Island, replied that Newport was in a very defenceless state, containing many avowed loyalists, or Tories, as they were generally called, and equally destitute of fortifications and troops. He requested that a detachment from the Continental army might march to Rhode Island, under a skilful commander, and mentioned General Lee, as an officer who would be highly acceptable to the people.

No troops could be spared from the army ; but General Lee set off immediately, with his guard, and a party of riflemen. At Providence he was joined by a company of cadets, and a number of minute men. With this small force, which was designed rather as an escort, in testimony of respect for his rank, than for any military object, he proceeded to Newport. He found the inhabitants in great dread of an armed vessel in the harbor, commanded by Captain Wallace, who had for some time held the town in awe by the terror of his guns, by his depredations upon the small craft in the bay, and his threats of vengeance upon the town, if he were not supplied with provisions according to his demands. The Tories also took courage under his protection, and set at defiance the authority of the legislature and patriotic committees.

It was not in the power of General Lee, with his small force, to repel these aggressions ; nor did he make the attempt. During his short stay in Newport, he pointed out certain places most suitable for erecting works of defence, and gave such advice and directions as the occasion would permit.

His indignation was particularly bent upon the To-

ries, whom he regarded as enemies to their country, and as deserving no forbearance. He summoned before him persons suspected of disaffection to the cause of the country, and required them to subscribe a very solemn oath, declaring that they would "neither directly nor indirectly assist the wicked instruments of ministerial tyranny and villany, commonly called the King's troops and navy, by furnishing them with provisions or refreshments of any kind, unless authorized by the Continental Congress, or the legislature, as at present established, of this particular colony of Rhode Island;" and also that they would convey no intelligence to the enemy, and would inform against any one whom they should know to be guilty of such a crime; and that they would take up arms, and submit to military discipline, when called upon by the proper authority, "in defence of the common rights and liberties of America." Colonel Wanton and two of the King's custom-house officers refused to take this oath, and it does not appear that any means of coercion were used. After completing this service, General Lee returned to the camp at Cambridge.

The policy of such an oath, administered under such circumstances, may perhaps be questioned. It might deter offenders through fear of detection, but it could scarcely weigh upon the conscience, or soften the will. This step was deemed important, however, at the time, and was evidently approved by General Washington. When he communicated a copy of the oath to the President of Congress, he said, "General Lee has just returned from his excursion to Rhode Island. He has pointed out the best method the island would admit of for its defence. He has endeavored, all in his power, to make friends of those that were our enemies. You have, enclosed, a specimen of his abilities in that way, for your perusal. I am of opinion, that if the same plan was pursued through every province, it would have a very good effect." This language, whether he advised the oath or not, amounts to a decided approbation of



the measure. General Lee himself seems not to have put much confidence in the oath as a check to the conduct of the Tories, but he regarded it as a test by which those who were inveterate in their hostility might be known. "I confess," he observes, "that men so eaten up with bigotry, as the bulk of them appear to be, will argue it is by no means obligatory ; but, if I mistake not, it will be a sort of criterion by which you will be able to distinguish the desperate fanatics from those who are reclaimable."

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## CHAPTER VII.

*Takes the Command in New York.—Alarm of the Inhabitants.—Enters the City with Troops from Connecticut.—His Plan of Defence.—Fortifies the City.—Takes Measures for seizing the Tories.—Appointed to the Command in Canada, and subsequently to that of the Southern Department.*

THE sailing of a detachment of British troops from Boston continued to be a source of anxiety to the American commander. It was strongly suspected that they were destined for New York, where there were neither troops nor other means of defence. On Long Island also the Tories were numerous and bold, and a majority of the voters had refused to send delegates to the Continental Congress. These persons were in close alliance with Governor Tryon, who had taken refuge on board a man-of-war in the harbor of New York, and could easily furnish them with arms. The citizens and public authorities were restrained from resolute action by their fears of the armed vessels, which could at any moment batter down the houses, or lay the city in ashes, and which exacted a constant supply of provisions. A few months before, when the people undertook to remove the cannon from the fort,



Captain Vandeput, commander of the *Asia*, an armed ship of sixty-four guns, had fired upon the town and wounded several of the citizens. Thus exposed and intimidated, the inhabitants and provincial government of New York had abstained from all preparations in the city for annoying the enemy, or even for defence.

In a military point of view, New York was a station too important to the whole country to be neglected. By possessing it, the enemy would command the Hudson, and might open a communication with Canada, and thereby obstruct, if not cut off entirely, the intercourse between the eastern and middle colonies. General Washington was deeply impressed with the necessity of protecting New York; yet it was not in his power to detach an adequate force from the army under his command, without subjecting himself to the imminent hazard of being attacked and defeated in his camp. The provincial army raised in New England, and adopted by the Continental Congress, had been dissolved, the time for which the men had enlisted was just expiring, the regiments under the new organization were slowly filling up, and he was obliged to call in a body of militia as a temporary substitute.

The state of affairs demanded decisive and immediate action. Notwithstanding the tardy and timid counsels of the authorities in New York, and their reluctance to take any steps for military preparations, it was believed that a body of volunteers sufficient for the occasion might be expeditiously raised in Connecticut, where the fire of patriotism burned brightly, and the martial spirit of the people was awake. Eager to make the experiment, General Lee solicited the command from Washington, with such instructions as would enable him to collect the troops and employ them, as circumstances might require, both for the defence of the city, and for disarming and securing the Tories on Long Island. "Not to crush these serpents," said he, "before their rattles are grown, would be ruinous."

Washington had no doubt of the importance of the measure, but, with his usual distrust of his powers, and his scrupulous caution not to exercise them beyond the strict intention of those from whom they were derived, a virtue which in the end contributed more than any other to the salvation of his country, he felt embarrassed, as to the course he should pursue. Congress had appointed him to the command of the American army; but did this imply that he should send troops to any point, and call on the local governments to supply men and means? As yet no such authority had been expressly granted. Lee would have cut the knot at once. "Your situation is such," said he, "that the salvation of the whole depends on your striking, at certain crises, vigorous strokes, without previously communicating your intention." Washington was perfectly satisfied that the public service required this latitude of construction; but how far it had been anticipated by Congress, or to what extent he could act in conformity with it under his commission, were questions not so clear in his own mind.

At this time Mr. John Adams, a member of Congress, was on a visit to his constituents in Massachusetts. His opinion was asked concerning the views of Congress, and the extent of General Washington's powers. With his accustomed promptness and zeal for his country's cause, he replied, that he regarded the authority of the Commander-in-chief as ample for the object in contemplation; that all the American forces were under his command, whether regular troops or volunteers, and that he was invested with full power to repel invasion, and act for the good of the service in every part of the country. Confirmed by this opinion of one of the ablest and most active members of Congress, who had himself been on the committee for framing his commission and instructions, the Commander-in-chief hesitated no longer, but immediately gave orders for effecting the enterprise.

General Lee left Cambridge on the 11th of January,

1776, attended by a small escort. He was instructed to proceed to New York, having collected volunteers on his way. and, when he should arrive there, to call to his assistance a regiment from New Jersey, and then to put the city in the best posture of defence which circumstances would admit, and disarm the Tories on Long Island. General Washington previously wrote to Governor Trumbull, of Connecticut, explaining the object of the enterprise, and requesting his coöperation. That ardent patriot, always foremost as well in vigorous action as in zeal and public spirit, immediately issued orders for raising two regiments by voluntary enlistment, each consisting of seven hundred and fifty men. Within two weeks the regiments were full, with an additional body of three hundred volunteers from Hartford county.

When General Lee arrived at Stamford, he was disabled by a severe fit of the gout, which compelled him to stop for a few days. Meantime, the news of his approach with an armed force reached New York. The people, panic-struck with the apprehension of immediate war, and trembling under the fear of hot shot and bomb-shells from the armed vessels in the harbor, were filled with consternation, and began to remove their effects from the town. The Committee of Safety, in whose hands the government then rested during a recess of the Provincial Congress, partook of the popular feeling, and expressed astonishment that troops should be marched into New York without their consent having first been obtained. They wrote a letter to General Lee, which he received at Stamford, deprecating all military demonstrations, which should disturb the repose of the city by provoking the hostility of the enemy's ships, and conjuring him not to march his troops beyond the confines of Connecticut, till they should have a further explanation of his designs.

In reply to this letter, which he called "wofully hysterical," he explained the objects of the expedition, and assured the committee, that there was no intention

of committing hostilities upon the men-of-war, and that the whole design was to protect and secure the city, by preventing the enemy from taking post there, or gaining a lodgment on Long Island. No active operations of a hostile character were intended; and he adds, "If the ships of war are quiet, I shall be quiet; but I declare solemnly, that, if they make a pretext of my presence to fire upon the town, the first house set in flames by their guns shall be the funeral pile of some of their best friends."

He was convinced, also, that the enemy would commit no such folly as that of burning the seaport towns, which were their only strongholds in the country. "The menacing of destruction to them might indeed be of admirable use, but the real destruction of them must extinguish all hopes of success." Moreover, if Governor Tryon, and the captains of the men-of-war, were to prescribe what number of troops should enter the town, they must be regarded as absolute dictators, a humiliation to which he trusted the freemen of New York were not disposed to submit. To quiet the alarms of the people, however, and soothe the anxieties of the committee, he promised to take with him into the city a part only of his force, till measures should be adopted for its permanent security.

At the same time he despatched a spirited and excellent letter to the President of the Continental Congress, suggesting plans for the defence of the city, and above all for defeating the machinations of the Tories, by disarming them, exacting oaths of allegiance to their country, and confining such as continued obstinate and active in their opposition. He had no mantle of charity for the sins of these people. Their covert practices and secret alliance with the enemy rendered them more dangerous than open foes, who came with arms in their hands, and whose movements might be known and met in fair encounter. In his opinion, this poison of disaffection was to be eradicated without scruple or forbearance.\*

\* The letter may be seen in Marshall's *Life of Washington*, Vol. II. Appendix, p. 64.

As soon as the movements of General Lee were known in the Continental Congress, three members of that body were appointed, at the suggestion of the New York delegates, to meet and confer with him concerning his plans and operation. They proceeded immediately to New York. Meantime General Lee, remaining ill at Stamford, ordered a regiment of Connecticut troops, under Colonel Waterbury, to march into the city. The colonel preceded his troops, and gave notice of their approach. The alarm of the Committee of Safety was now at its highest point; and moreover they felt their dignity a little wounded, as they conceived that no military officer could march troops into the city without their consent. Indeed, they had passed a resolution, declaring that all troops within the limits of New York would be under their control. They complained, hesitated, disagreed among themselves, and took no measures to provide for the regiment when it should arrive. Colonel Waterbury's patience was exhausted, and he told them that the troops were expected in a few hours, and that he should at all events place them in the vacant barracks, where they must remain till he should receive further orders from his commander.

Just at this crisis General Lee arrived, having been conveyed from Stamford in a litter, which he caused to be constructed for the purpose. His presence, and that of the members of Congress deputed to meet him, contributed to assuage the rising terrors of the Committee of Safety. The conferences were harmonious and conciliatory. It was agreed that the town could not be fortified against the enemy's ships; but it was proposed to erect batteries, at commanding points, of sufficient extent to contain two thousand men, and also on both sides of the narrow pass at Hell Gate. A fortified camp was likewise to be formed on Long Island, opposite to New York; and military works were to be constructed in the Highlands, and guarded by a battalion. Such was the plan, and General Lee thought it judicious and complete. It only remained to carry it into execution.

General Clinton entered the harbor of New York on the same day that Lee arrived in the city. No troops came with him, and he gave out that his object was merely to pay a visit to his friend Governor Tryon, who was then on board one of the armed vessels. "If it is really so," said Lee, "it is the most whimsical piece of civility I ever heard of. He informs us, that his intention is for North Carolina, where he expects five regiments from England; that he only brought two regiments of light infantry from Boston. This is certainly a droll way of proceeding. To communicate his full plan to the enemy is too novel to be credited." Yet, novel as it was, the intelligence proved to be accurate, as we shall see in the sequel.

The General lost no time in prosecuting his plans for the defence of the city. In this matter he had the co-operation of the public authorities; but on one point there was an irreconcilable difference of opinion between them. The armed vessels had hitherto been supplied with provisions from the shore. General Lee remonstrated strongly against this kind of intercourse, as incompatible with the relations in which the two parties stood to each other, and he desired to cut it off at once. The fear of the enemy's cannon, however, was more powerful than his eloquence, and he finally yielded the point, and the more readily as it did not interfere with the execution of his plans of defence.

At the southern extremity of the city stood an old fort, originally the work of the Dutch, and subsequently enlarged and maintained by the British colonial government. To this was attached a battery facing the water, well lined with cannon, and the commander of the *Asia* had threatened destruction to the town if these should be removed. Regardless of this threat, General Lee ordered them to be secured. They were seized at noonday, and even the men and boys assisted, with wonderful alacrity, to remove them to a place of safety. From this circumstance he inferred, that the leaders only were timid and lukewarm, and that the people



generally were as well affected to the patriotic cause as any on the continent.

He was disappointed in some of his expectations. The committee of Congress had agreed that five thousand men were necessary at New York, and he had flattered himself with the hope that this number would be provided ; but his force never amounted to more than about seventeen hundred. It consisted of the two Connecticut regiments, one from New Jersey under Lord Stirling, and four hundred minute men. At this critical time the authorities of New York were extremely tardy in raising men, even for the protection of their own firesides ; and although they permitted their neighbors to perform this task, yet they looked on with an apathy and indifference, which the ardent spirit of General Lee could not easily comprehend or pardon. This untoward state of affairs, however, seemed to have no other effect on him, than to sharpen his zeal and quicken his activity.

He began the construction of three redoubts on Long Island opposite to the city, which ultimately constituted a part of the works on the heights of Brooklyn. One regiment was employed in this service, and the other two regiments, and two hundred minute men, were stationed in New York. Another body of minute men was stationed at Hell Gate, where they built a redoubt on the western side of the pass. He made no attempts to annoy the ships, but contented himself with erecting batteries and other works of defence. He pulled down the wall of the old fort next to the town, to prevent its being converted into a citadel by the enemy, and threw barricades across the principal streets near the water, and fortified some of them with cannon.

His zeal and energy, however, were not confined to these military preparations. He regarded it as a special and imperious duty to crush the spirit of disaffection by subduing or disabling the Tories, some of whom lurked in the city, and many others nestled on Long Island. Their names and characters were notori-



ous. Encouraged by the presence of Governor Tryon, and the armed ships in the harbor, they were bold in their opposition, and took little pains to conceal their designs, as to the part they intended to act. The Continental Congress had already sent a regiment of New Jersey troops to Long Island, for the purpose of taking away their arms; but these could easily be supplied by the enemy. A resolution had likewise been passed, recommending to the provincial governments to seize the more troublesome and dangerous Tories, and authorizing them to call to their aid the Continental troops.

General Lee put a broader construction upon this resolution than it was probably designed to bear. The intention seems to have been, that the management of the Tories should be in the charge of the civil authorities of the provinces in which they resided, and not in that of the military, or even of the Continental Congress itself. This distinction was overlooked by General Lee, and he issued orders for seizing the Tories, and for tendering to them the same formidable oath, that he had prescribed to the disaffected persons in Rhode Island. In this proceeding he was borne out by his instructions from General Washington; but it was not satisfactory to the New York Congress, who were jealous of military interference. His firmness was not shaken by this jealousy, although he expressed entire submission to the civil authority in cases which did not conflict with the public service, or the positive duties of his command.

The unfortunate issue of the last campaign in Canada, and the fall of the brave Montgomery under the walls of Quebec, impressed on Congress the importance of appointing a successor to that general, whose character and talents should inspire public confidence, and afford the surest guaranty for future success. General Lee was selected for this arduous station about two weeks after he arrived in New York. The estimation in which he was held by the representatives of the nation may be understood by a letter from Mr. John Adams,

who was then in Congress. "We want you at New York; we want you at Cambridge; we want you in Virginia; but Canada seems of more importance than any of those places, and therefore you are sent there. I wish you as many laurels as Wolfe and Montgomery reaped there, with a happier fate."

A few days afterwards, however, his destination was changed. Rumor and other indications made it nearly certain, that the enemy were preparing for a descent upon the Southern States. The detachment from Boston under General Clinton had passed in that direction, and there were reasons for expecting reënforcements from England destined to coöperate with him. To meet this crisis, General Lee was ordered to take command of the southern department.

He remained a month in New York, during which time his vigilance and activity were unremitted. Considering the wavering temper of the provincial authorities, and the kind of horror with which they at first beheld his presence with an armed force, he deserves credit for the prudence and discretion with which he contrived to conciliate their favor and gain their acquiescence, if he failed to raise their zeal to the same degree of heat as his own. He was resolute and successful in effecting his military objects, although he forbore, as a matter of expediency, to insist on points of minor weight. Out of deference to the fears of some of the principal inhabitants, which he believed wholly chimerical, he had allowed the intercourse to go on between the enemy's ships and the city, under certain restraints; but even this license wore heavily upon his patience, and it is doubtful if he would have tolerated it much longer. The New York Congress sent to him a copy of regulations for continuing to supply the armed vessels with provisions, which he was desired to examine and approve. He replied, that "he was to resign the command to Lord Stirling that night; but, if he were to continue, he would not consent to supply them with any provisions, as they were at open war with us; that

he hoped Lord Stirling would be of the same opinion ; and that his instructions from the Continental Congress were to use every means in his power for the defence of the city."

These differences of opinion, though they existed continually, did not mar or retard the progress of his main undertaking ; and his works of defence, both in their location and construction, were allowed to have been judiciously planned and executed, and they were turned to good account six weeks afterwards, when Washington with the Continental army arrived in New York.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

*Proceeds to Virginia.—His Operations against Lord Dunmore.—Constructs armed Boats for the Rivers.—Recommends the Use of Spears.—Attempts to form a Body of Cavalry.—Advises the Seizure of Governor Eden.—Intercepted Letters unfold the Plan of the Enemy.—Removal of disaffected Persons.—Letter to Patrick Henry, urging a Declaration of Independence.—Enemy land in North Carolina.—He marches to meet them, and advances to South Carolina.*

GENERAL LEE resigned his command in New York on the 6th of March, 1776. After passing a few days in Philadelphia, to ascertain the views and receive the instructions of Congress, he proceeded to Williamsburg, in Virginia, where he arrived on the 29th of the same month. Lord Dunmore, at this time, held possession of the waters of Virginia with a naval force. He had proclaimed martial law, offered freedom to the slaves who would rally under his banner, and, by threats or persuasion, had prevailed on many persons to embrace the royal cause and join his ranks. With this motley company of recruits, aided by his ships, he

had committed ravages on the shores of James River, and Norfolk had been destroyed; but he was thwarted in his attempt to burn Hampton, and was beaten in the severe action at the Great Bridge.

To repel these aggressions, the militia seized their arms, and hurried to the scene of strife. Regular troops were raised by the Assembly, amounting, in the whole, to nine regiments, which were taken into the Continental army. When General Lee took the command, these regiments, not then entirely filled up, were stationed at different points along the borders of the Chesapeake Bay, on a comprehensive plan of defence. A regiment from North Carolina had also come forward to aid in the common cause.

The principal attention was, of course, directed to the motions of Lord Dunmore, whose little fleet was then at anchor in Elizabeth River, near Portsmouth. It consisted of the armed vessels *Liverpool*, *Kingfisher*, *Otter*, *Roebuck*, *Dunmore*, *William*, *Anna*, and about twenty tenders. The *Liverpool* carried twenty-eight guns; the others were of smaller force. To these were joined seventy or eighty merchant vessels, belonging to the loyalists, or prizes, with valuable cargoes on board, estimated to be worth one hundred and forty thousand pounds sterling. A small body of regular troops, a regiment of blacks, the marines, and the sailors of the trading vessels, constituted his strength for operations on land. Connected with the fleet was a camp on shore, fortified by an intrenchment, whence he obtained supplies of water.

The arrival of General Lee was hailed with joy by the inhabitants of Virginia, and especially by the Committee of Safety at Williamsburg, in whose hands the executive government of the province was then deposited, during the recess of the Convention, and at the head of whom was Edmund Pendleton. They manifested a cordial wish to unite and coöperate with him in every available plan for putting the military affairs of the province in the best condition, which circum-

stances and their means would admit. In his letters to his friends, he acknowledges their noble spirit and vigilant activity, though he complains of their economy as cramping, in some degree, the expansive schemes which his burning zeal was eager to put in execution. His first task was to obtain reports from the officers at the several stations, detailing the exact state of the army, particularly from those in the neighborhood of Lord Dunmore; and next, to send out parties to reconnoitre and examine such places as were most accessible to the attacks of the enemy, or at which preparations for annoyance might be made.

Considering the number of creeks and navigable streams with which Virginia was intersected, he thought it extremely important that these should be guarded by armed boats; and he immediately applied himself to this object. Two weeks after his arrival in Williamsburg, he writes thus to Richard Henry Lee, then a member of Congress at Philadelphia.

"I propose fitting your rivers with twelve- or eighteen-oared boats, mounting a six-pounder at the head of each, fortifying the sides with occasional mantlets, musket-proof, and manning them with stout volunteers, whose principle should be boarding. I am mistaken, when we are sufficiently provided with fleets of this kind, if a single tender will show itself in your rivers. I have already, for experiment's sake, sent out one boat, armed and principled in this manner, on a cruise, and expect with impatience the issue. The men have their cutlasses and pistols, and seem to taste the project. I shall order twenty for each great river. The expense is trifling, and the spirit, the very principle of coming to close quarters, will naturally inspire the people with confidence in their own force and valor.

"Another great point I seem in a fair way of obtaining; the conciliating your soldiers to the use of spears. We had a battalion out his day; two companies of the strongest and tallest were armed with this weapon; they were formed, something like the Triarii of the

Romans, in the rear of the battalions, occasionally either to throw themselves into the intervals of the line, or form a third, second, or front rank, in close order. It has a fine effect to the eye, and the men, in general, seemed convinced of the utility of the arrangement."

On another occasion, he recommends the use of spears to the government of North Carolina. "As to arms," he says, "I believe it will be impossible to procure them, unless you have on the frontiers a sufficient number of rifles. For my own part, I like these for the battalions even better than muskets, particularly if you can conciliate your men to the use of spears. I never had, in my life, any opinion of bayonets. My opinion may appear singular; but it is certain they never have been used, though we hear so frequently of attacking with bayonets." It does not follow that he preferred spears to muskets, even for any part of the troops, but only as a substitute for arms which, at this stage of the war, could not be procured. To remedy this deficiency as far as he could, he sent officers to the interior of the country, to purchase rifles of the hunters.

His next effort was to raise a body of cavalry. Hitherto, little attention had been paid to this kind of force. In fact, Congress had done nothing, and the several colonies had gone no further than to encourage volunteers in a few instances. This neglect appeared to him so glaring, that he could not refrain from repeated and earnest remonstrances. It should be considered, however, that the Americans had never been accustomed to cavalry; the nature of the colonial warfare, in the midst of forests and in a broken country, did not admit of its use; and the opinion was still prevalent, that it could not be employed to advantage. To enlighten this ignorance, and correct these false impressions, he found was not within the power of argument, and he now determined to try the force of example. Without waiting the tardy process of bringing



over the Committee of Safety to his views, he resolved to appeal to the spirit and patriotism of the young men of Virginia, and to call on them to form themselves into volunteer companies of light dragoons, equipped for the public service. He published an address containing this proposal, and an explanation of his plan. The gentlemen volunteers, as they were called, were to receive no pay, but were to be furnished with rations for themselves and their horses. They were to be armed with "a short rifle carbine, a light pike eight feet in length, and a tomahawk." Such was the scheme in its nascent form; but his command in Virginia was so short, that he probably had not the satisfaction of seeing it matured to the extent he had fondly hoped.\*

Whilst the commander of the southern department was thus employed in rousing and concentrating the military energies of Virginia, an event occurred which raised a loud clamor against him in Maryland. In the early part of April, a small vessel was taken in the Chesapeake Bay, which had been despatched by Lord Dunmore to Mr. Eden, Governor of Maryland, who was then at Annapolis. On board this vessel was Mr. Alexander Ross, the bearer of papers, among which were letters from Lord George Germain to Governor Eden. These were brought to General Lee, and they appeared to him, and to the Committee of Safety at Williamsburg, to be of a dangerous tendency, and to implicate Governor Eden in transactions hostile to the liberties of the country. In his opinion, and in that of the committee, the public interest required that Governor Eden should be taken into custody, and his papers seized, without a moment's delay. The letters were

\* There was a strange apathy on this subject in Congress. Richard Henry Lee, in a letter to General Lee, dated May 11th, says, "I find some gentlemen expressing dissatisfaction at your having promised forage and rations to such cavalry as might be assembled in Virginia." Again, "As a committee of Congress has already reported against having Continental cavalry in North Carolina, I suppose the same opinion will prevail respecting Virginia; but the measure is so wise and necessary for the defence of our colony, that I wish and hope a few squadrons may be formed on colonial expense." Congress ultimately allowed rations and forage for volunteer dragoons in Virginia, not exceeding five hundred.



immediately transmitted to the Continental Congress, and at the same time he wrote to Mr. Samuel Parviance, chairman of the Committee of Safety at Baltimore, as follows:

"I conjure you, as you value the liberties and rights of the community of which you are a member, not to lose a moment, and in my name, if my name is of consequence enough, to direct the commanding officer of your troops at Annapolis immediately to seize the person of Governor Eden; the sin and blame be on my head; I will answer for all to the Congress. The justice and necessity of the measure will be best explained by the packet, transmitted to you by the Committee of Safety from this place."

The Baltimore committee complied with this request, and sent a small armed force by water to Annapolis with an order to seize the Governor.

The Council of Safety at Annapolis, then the executive of the province, the Governor's powers being practically suspended, took umbrage at this proceeding, and interfered to prevent the execution of the order, not so much, it would seem, because they disapproved the measure, as because they conceived their authority to have been slighted by an application, without their knowledge, to a local committee. They passed resolutions reprehending with severity the Baltimore committee, and thereby casting censure upon General Lee, as the first mover. He wrote a letter to the council, explaining and defending the course he had taken, on the ground of the urgency of the case and of his not being aware that there were any troops at Annapolis. He claimed merit for performing what he believed to be a most important public service, and concluded by saying, "If the council think I harbor a wish to extend the military authority, or of trespassing on the civil, they do me most cruel injustice. Although I was bred in the army, I thank God that the spirit of the citizen has been always predominant; and I solemnly declare, that, if I thought it possible that I should ever be in-

toxicated by military command, I would now, whilst I retain my senses, beg leave to divest myself of my present office, and serve as a volunteer in the glorious cause in which I have embarked my person, fortune, and reputation."

The Continental Congress showed in what light they viewed his conduct by passing a resolution, as soon as they received the intercepted letters, calling on the Maryland Council of Safety to seize Governor Eden. The council contented themselves, however, with exacting a promise from the Governor, that he would remain quietly at Annapolis till the Convention of the provincial representatives should be assembled.

In fact, it can hardly be doubted that General Lee had been in some degree influenced by a suspicion of the spirit and firmness of the Maryland council. The conciliating manners and private character of Governor Eden had drawn around him many personal friends, even among those who were foremost in abetting the revolutionary movements. The influence he had thus acquired was visible in recent transactions. The Convention had three months before instructed their delegates in Congress to oppose any proposition for independence. The majority of the leaders in Maryland, strenuous for their rights, and arming for war, were still talking of conciliation, while the people throughout the land were crying out that the Rubicon was passed.

One of the intercepted letters from Lord George Germain to Governor Eden revealed a secret of the greatest moment. It stated that "an armament, consisting of seven regiments, with a fleet of frigates and small ships, was in readiness to proceed to the southern colonies." Its first destination was to North Carolina, whence it was to operate against Virginia or South Carolina, as circumstances might render most advisable. This intelligence was extremely opportune, since it not only unfolded the enemy's plan, but it allowed time for preparation. North Carolina had been assigned as the

first point of attack, in consequence of the effective co-operation expected from the loyalists in that province, who had embodied and armed themselves the year before, and raised the standard of defiance. Their recent defeat and discomfiture, however, in the battle of Moore's Creek Bridge, had left no room for this hope; and it was General Lee's opinion, that the theatre of action would be the Chesapeake, as obviously affording the most tempting inducements to the enemy.

At all events, it behoved the Virginians to be prepared for such a result; and General Lee, with his accustomed energy and zeal, devoted himself to this object. By his advice, the Committee of Safety resolved to remove all the inhabitants, with their cattle and valuable effects, from the two counties, Norfolk and Princess Anne, nearest to Lord Dunmore's station, and place them beyond his reach and influence, in the interior of the province. It was found impossible, with all the guards that could be established, to prevent his holding intercourse with persons in these counties, and receiving supplies from them.

General Lee passed several days at Suffolk and Portsmouth, in the neighborhood of Dunmore's fleet and camp, where he could obtain the best information, and adapt his measures in the most effectual manner to attain the end proposed. The order for a general removal operated as a heavy hardship upon many persons, against whom there was no charge of suspicious practices or sinister designs, and it was afterwards so far modified as to extend only to the notoriously disaffected and incorrigible. In a few instances, the houses of individuals, who were known to have rendered assistance to the enemy, were burned, and their property was seized for public use.

Whilst General Lee was thus engaged in providing for the defence of Virginia, he received information from the government of North Carolina, that a fleet with about three thousand men, under Lord Cornwallis, had arrived in Cape Fear River, and a pressing re-

quest that he would hasten forward and take the command in that quarter. General Clinton, with the detachment from Boston, had likewise arrived there, after having made a visit to Lord Dunmore on his way. Whatever might be the ultimate movements of the enemy, he could not hesitate to regard North Carolina as his present post of duty. As soon as he could make the proper arrangements, therefore, he proceeded to that province, leaving General Andrew Lewis at the head of military affairs in Virginia.

Just before his departure, he wrote the following letter to Patrick Henry, who was two months afterwards elected the first Governor of the commonwealth under the new form of government. It is interesting as an exposition of the sentiments of General Lee, and as affording hints of those of Patrick Henry, on the weighty subject of independence.

“Williamsburg, May 7th, 1776.

“DEAR SIR,

“If I had not the highest opinion of your character and liberal way of thinking, I should not venture to address myself to you; and, if I were not equally persuaded of the great weight and influence, which the transcendent abilities you possess must naturally confer, I should not give myself the trouble of writing, nor you the trouble of reading, this long letter. Since our conversation yesterday, my thoughts have been solely employed on the great question, whether independence ought or ought not to be immediately declared. Having weighed the argument on both sides, I am clearly of the opinion, that we must, as we value the liberties of America, or even her existence, without a moment's delay declare for independence. If my reasons appear weak, you will excuse them for the disinterestedness of the author, as I may venture to affirm, that no man on this continent will sacrifice more than myself by the separation. But if I have the good fortune to offer any arguments, which have escaped

your understanding, and they should make the desired impression, I shall think I have rendered the greatest service to the community.

“The objection you made yesterday, if I understood you rightly, to an immediate declaration, was by many degrees the most specious, indeed, it is the only tolerable one, that I have yet heard. You say, and with great justice, that we ought previously to have felt the pulse of France and Spain. I more than believe, I am almost confident, that it has been done; at least, I can assert, upon recollection, that some of the Committee of Secrecy have assured me that the sentiments of both these courts, or their agents, had been sounded, and were found to be as favorable as could be wished. But, admitting that we are utter strangers to their sentiments on the subject, and that we run some risk of this declaration being coldly received by these powers, such is our situation, that the risk must be ventured.

“On one side, there are the most probable chances of our success, founded on the certain advantages which must manifest themselves to French understandings by a treaty of alliance with America. The strength and weakness, the opulence and poverty, of every state are estimated in the scale of comparison with her immediate rival. The superior commerce and marine force of England were evidently established on the monopoly of her American trade. The inferiority of France, in these two capital points, consequently had its source in the same origin. Any deduction from this monopoly must bring down her rival in proportion to this deduction.

The French are, and always have been, sensible of these great truths. Your idea, that they may be diverted from a line of policy, which assures them such immense and permanent advantages, by an offer of partition from Great Britain, appears to me, if you will excuse the phrase, an absolute chimera. They must be wretched politicians, indeed, if they would prefer the uncertain acquisition, and the precarious, expensive

possession, of one or two provinces, to the greater part of the commerce of the whole. Besides, were not the advantages from the latter so manifestly greater than those that would accrue from the imagined partition scheme, it is notorious that acquisition of territory, or even colonial possessions, which require either men or money to retain them, are entirely repugnant to the spirit and principles of the present French court. It is so repugnant, indeed, that it is most certain they have lately entertained thoughts of abandoning their West India islands. *Le commerce et l'économie* are the cry, down from the King to the lowest minister. From these considerations, I am convinced that they will immediately and essentially assist us, if independence is declared.

“But, allowing that there can be no certainty, but mere chances, in our favor, I do insist upon it that these chances render it our duty to adopt the measure, as, by procrastination, our ruin is inevitable. Should it now be determined to wait the result of a previous formal negotiation with France, a whole year must pass over our heads before we can be acquainted with the result. In the mean time, we are to struggle through a campaign without arms, ammunition, or any one necessary of war. Disgrace and defeat will infallibly ensue; the soldiers and officers will become so disappointed, that they will abandon their colors, and probably never be persuaded to make another effort.

“But there is another consideration still more cogent. I can assure you that the spirit of the people cries out for this declaration; the military, in particular, men and officers, are outrageous on the subject; and a man of your excellent discernment need not be told how dangerous it would be, in our present circumstances, to dally with the spirit, or disappoint the expectations, of the bulk of the people. May not despair, anarchy, and finally submission, be the bitter fruits? I am firmly persuaded that they will; and, in this persuasion, I most devoutly pray that you may not merely recom-



mend, but positively lay injunctions on your servants in Congress to embrace a measure so necessary to our salvation.

“Yours most sincerely,

“CHARLES LEE.”

Eight days after the date of this letter, the Convention of Virginia instructed their delegates in Congress, by a unanimous resolve, to propose to that body “to declare the united colonies free and independent states.” The event proved that General Lee thoroughly understood the sense of the people. His suggestion, that the French court had no wish to acquire territory on the American continent, was also correct. This is demonstrated by the subsequent treaty of alliance, and by the public and secret correspondence of the French ministers during the whole period of the war.

The Virginia Convention voted to raise immediately eleven hundred and fifty minute men for the assistance of North Carolina. General Lee ordered one of the Continental regiments on the same service. North Carolina had raised five regiments on the Continental establishment, which were commanded by General Moore, and were stationed in such a manner as to be ready to meet the enemy, if they should attempt to penetrate the country. General Lee arrived at Newbern on the 27th of May, and was welcomed by an address from the inhabitants, in which they say, “Impressed with a lively sense of your generous and manly exertions in defence of American rights and liberties, we are happy in having an opportunity of paying our grateful tribute of thanks, and offering our most cordial congratulations on your arrival among us.” He was everywhere greeted with hearty salutations and with tokens of respect and confidence.

He received intelligence from General Moore that Sir Peter Parker, General Clinton, and Lord Cornwallis, were in Cape Fear River, with sixty or seventy topsail vessels, of which seven were ships of war, and



that about three thousand men were landed near Fort Johnson. As yet, the enemy's intentions could only be conjectured. That they would operate in North Carolina, was not believed; but it was problematical whether they would turn their course to Virginia or South Carolina. In this state of suspense, it was necessary to be prepared to act at both points. All doubt was soon removed; for the fleet sailed out of the river on the 1st of June, and, three days afterwards, appeared off the harbor of Charleston. General Lee followed, and reached the city on the same day.

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## CHAPTER IX.

*Takes Command of the Troops in South Carolina.—Preparations for Defence.—Affair at Fort Moultrie.—British retire from Carolina.—General Lee marches to Georgia.—Plans an Expedition against East Florida.—Recalled to the North by Congress.—Joins the main Army at Haerlem Heights.—Marches to White Plains.—Washington crosses the Hudson, and Lee left in Command of the Eastern Troops at White Plains.*

THIS invasion of the enemy had been anticipated by the South Carolinians, in consequence of Lord George Germain's intercepted letter, and they had prepared to meet it. The legislature had voted an army of four thousand men, and between two and three thousand were already raised. They were extremely active in throwing up fortifications around the city, and on the islands adjacent to the harbor, particularly on Sullivan's Island, situate within the bar, and most exposed to the enemy's shipping, where much progress had been made in a strong work of defence constructed of palmetto logs. The same zeal that was conspicuous in

other parts of the continent animated all classes of the inhabitants.

General Lee's arrival diffused universal satisfaction. His fame had gone before him, and everything was hoped from his talents, his ardor, and military knowledge. "His presence," says Moultrie, "gave us great spirits; he taught us to think lightly of the enemy, and gave a spur to all our actions." But he found himself in an unexpected dilemma. Not a single officer or soldier was on the Continental establishment, although Congress had, six months before, authorized three battalions to be raised in South Carolina, and had sent General Armstrong to take the command, who had been a month in Charleston.\*

The reason assigned by the Carolinians was, that they were not satisfied with the military regulations of Congress, and preferred their own system. In this state of things, no Continental officer, not even General Lee, could command the troops of South Carolina. To waver on such a point, whilst the enemy was at the door, seemed the height of folly; and Mr. John Rutledge, President of South Carolina under the new constitution then recently adopted, wisely settled the question by issuing an order, which placed all the provincial troops under the command of General Lee; an act which met the entire approbation of the soldiers and the public.† The army was joined by a detachment from North Carolina, and a regiment from Virginia, both of which had been ordered forward by General Lee, while on his march from the north.

From that time he was devoted, day and night, to the arduous task of preparation. The chief care was bestowed upon the fort at Sullivan's Island, which presented a fair mark to the enemy's fleet, and which it was presumed would be the first object of assault. The island was separated from the main by shoal water nearly a mile in width, and much labor was expended in the

\* General Armstrong's *Letter* to Lee, May 8th, 1776.

† Moultrie's *Memoirs*, Vol. I., p. 151.

construction of a bridge, to serve for a retreat in case of disasters; but it could not be finished in season.

Colonel Moultrie, of South Carolina, commanded in the fort, and Colonel Thompson was stationed with a body of riflemen three miles distant, at the eastern extremity of the island, with the view of guarding that part against the descent of the British troops under General Clinton. Detachments were likewise posted by General Lee at Haddrell's Point, and other places along the main opposite to Sullivan's Island; but these were too remote to afford any direct assistance to the defenders of the fort. For several days the enemy's fleet remained on the outside of the bar, and General Clinton landed his men on Long Island, separated from Sullivan's Island at the east by a narrow passage, which was supposed to be fordable at low tide.

Such was the position of the two parties on the 28th of June, when, early in the morning, two men-of-war, the *Bristol* and the *Experiment*, carrying fifty guns each, six frigates, and a bomb-vessel, having passed the bar at full tide the evening before, sailed boldly up within cannon-shot of the fort, cast anchor, and commenced a furious cannonade. It was returned with equal spirit and unerring effect by Moultrie and his soldiers, affording an extraordinary instance of one of the hottest actions on record fought by men totally inexperienced, with all the skill, precision, and coolness of consummate veterans. The conflict continued for ten hours, till eight o'clock at night, without intermission, except for a brief space when the powder in the fort was nearly exhausted. As soon as a seasonable supply arrived, the fire was renewed. General Lee watched the action with intense interest at Haddrell's Point. He once passed over to the fort in a boat, stayed a short time, pointed two or three of the guns, and then said to the commander, "Colonel, I see you are doing very well here; you have no occasion for me; I will go up to town again;" and then returned in his boat, exposed to

the enemy's fire.\* He was too generous to rob the brave colonel of the glory of the day by remaining in the fort.

The victory was complete, and the more honorable as obtained over an enemy who had fought with the most determined resolution and bravery. At dusk Sir Peter Parker slipped his cables, and floated away with the tide beyond the reach of the guns at the fort. On board the *Bristol*, forty men were killed and seventy-one wounded; and the *Experiment* lost twenty-three killed and fifty-six wounded. The other vessels suffered less. The American loss was twelve killed and twenty-four wounded. Three of the frigates ran aground in attempting to enfilade the fort on the western side. One of them was scuttled and burned. General Clinton, finding the water in the channel too deep to be forded, could not land on the island, and of course his troops took no part in the action. Neither fortune nor courage was propitious to the assailants. In honor of the commander, the fort was thenceforth called Fort Moultrie.

This repulse put an end to the scheme of a southern invasion, of the success of which the ministry had formed sanguine expectations. The fleet speedily sailed, with all the troops on board, to join the grand army under General Howe at New York. The blow was fatal to Lord Dunmore, who, destitute of the support which a southern victory would have given him, was soon compelled to cease from his depredations in the Chesapeake, and to withdraw likewise to Sir William Howe's army.

For several days it was doubtful whether the retreating enemy would not turn upon Virginia, and General Lee held his troops in readiness to march in that direction; but, as soon as it was ascertained that the fleet had passed the Chesapeake without entering, he formed the plan of an expedition to East Florida. The frontiers of Georgia had been infested by marauding parties

\* Moultrie's *Memoirs*, Vol. II., p. 176.

from that province, and a post was established on St. Mary's River, under a British officer, which became the rendezvous of refugees from the southern provinces, vagrant negroes, and hostile Indians, who were furnished with arms and incited to plunder the inhabitants.

To break up and disperse this nest of marauders, which daily increased in numbers, and to strike terror into the Florida Indians by a vigorous onset upon that province, were thought to be objects of special importance. The enemy held possession of St. Augustine, a fortress too formidable to be attempted without heavy artillery, which the Americans did not possess; but every other part of Florida was open to their incursions.

The plan was cordially approved by the prominent patriots of Georgia, and General Lee hastened to Savannah with the intention of carrying it into execution. He was followed by General Howe, a Continental officer of North Carolina, and by Colonel Moultrie, with detachments of North and South Carolina troops. There was also a Continental battalion in Georgia, which had been raised early in the year, and at the head of which was Colonel McIntosh. The command of the proposed Florida expedition was offered to Colonel Moultrie, and he accepted it on condition that he should be furnished with eight hundred men and the requisite supplies. The men were at hand, but there was a deficiency of almost everything else. The season in that hot climate was unfavorable; yet such exertions were made as to afford a fair prospect of success.

In the midst of these preparations, however, about the 1st of September, after General Lee had been a month in Savannah, he received an order from Congress requiring him to repair immediately to Philadelphia. The expedition was then abandoned, the Carolina troops were recalled, and, with as little delay as possible, he pursued his journey to the north.

He had commanded in the southern department six

months, and had been perpetually engaged in scenes of the utmost activity, which called for a full measure of military skill, ability, discretion, judgment, and knowledge of mankind. On all occasions he had acquitted himself honorably, with disinterestedness, and an unwavering devotion to the cause of the country. If his zeal and ardent temperament sometimes gave him the air of assumption, and impelled him beyond the exact limits of his delegated powers, it was soon discovered that his aims were for the public good, and that he never shrank from the responsibility of any of his acts.

Whilst he was at Savannah, he wrote a letter "to the Governor at St. François," describing the state of affairs in America, with arguments to prove the advantages that France would gain by an alliance in the war, or at least by furnishing arms and other military supplies, so as to secure the success of the Americans. The letter was ably written, and was probably designed for the French court, to whom he might naturally suppose it would be forwarded by the Governor.

By the resignation of General Ward, he was now the second in command of the American army, standing next in rank to Washington. When he reported himself to Congress, he was directed to proceed to the camp at Haerlem Heights, where the main army was then posted, daily expecting an attack from Sir William Howe, who had a month before taken possession of New York. He arrived on the 14th of October, and took command of the right wing of the army.

The works on Haerlem Heights were strong and well manned, and it was hoped the attack would be made at that place. The British general chose not to hazard the attempt. Bunker's Hill was too fresh in his recollection. It was his policy to draw General Washington away from his stronghold further into the country, where he might meet him to greater advantage, or to enclose him between the Hudson and Long Island Sound by falling on his rear, and thus cutting off his communication with the interior. He had already be-



gun to manœuvre for these objects, and had landed a large division of his troops on Frog's Neck, a peninsula jutting into the Sound about nine miles eastward from the American camp. At this moment General Lee arrived.

The post at Haerlem was so strong, including Fort Washington, and the desire of Congress to maintain such a force there as to obstruct the passage of the Hudson had been so emphatically expressed, that a majority of the officers had decided a few days before that the army ought to remain in its present position, and act against the enemy as circumstances should dictate. A council was held on the 12th of October, however, two days before the arrival of General Lee, at which this decision was reversed, and it was agreed that the principal part of the army should march into the country, so as to keep in advance of the British columns, and that eight thousand men only should remain for the defence of the Heights.

In the mean time, a different face was put upon affairs by the movements of the enemy; General Howe's numbers at Frog's Neck continued to increase, and it was obvious that he intended to bring all his disposable strength to bear upon the American rear. Another council was called on the 16th, at which General Lee was present; and it was decided, with one dissenting voice only, that the whole army, except two thousand men left to garrison Fort Washington, should march across Kingsbridge, and so far into the country as, at all events, to outflank the enemy. General Lee was in favor of this resolution, as indeed were all the officers but one.\*

\* This officer was General George Clinton. Under the circumstances, his dissent was singular. He assigned his reasons, however, in writing. He was extremely anxious to prevent the enemy from ascending the Hudson, and to protect the country. He said the Americans were numerically as strong as the British, that the latter must be met somewhere, and that he believed the position and strong works of Haerlem afforded a better place for defence than any other.

Colonel Harrison, the secretary of General Washington, in writing to the President of Congress the day after the meeting of the council, and informing him of the resolution to march the army from Haerlem, says, "General Lee has strongly urged the absolute necessity of the measure."



In this matter, however, some writers have claimed for him more credit than the facts would seem to justify. It has been said, that the decision was obtained mainly, if not wholly, by his eloquent and persuasive arguments, strengthened by the unbounded confidence which the officers of the council reposed in his military knowledge and talents; and that by his agency, thus employed, the army was rescued from a most perilous situation. Whatever grounds there may have been for the previous opinions of the officers, it would seem obvious that, at the time of General Lee's arrival in camp, when Sir William Howe was in vigorous motion, with the larger part of his army, to gain the rear of the Americans, and cut off their communication with the country, the only course left for them was to retreat from their position. That General Lee should urge such a measure, was consistent with his character, and needs not be questioned; but that it required much weight of argument to convince the Commander-in-chief, and the other officers, of its necessity, is not credible.

The attempt to retain Fort Washington, after the army marched from Haerlem Heights, has generally been regarded as the most palpable blunder, and its capture the most serious loss, that occurred during the war. The proceedings of the council on this subject have not been preserved; but it has always been understood, and historians have not disputed the fact, that General Lee strenuously opposed the measure of leaving a garrison at that post. In adopting it, General Washington was influenced by two motives. The first and principal one was, that he had received a resolution of Congress, two or three days before, desiring him "by every art, and at whatever expense, to obstruct effectually the navigation of the North River between Fort Washington and Mount Constitution." This could not be done without a strong garrison. Secondly, the troops could at any time be withdrawn across the river, without hazard, by General Greene, who was sta-

tioned on the opposite side, at Fort Lee, or Mount Constitution.

Moreover, during the movement of the main army, the possession of this post, and of the other works on the Heights, was extremely important in another point of view. It interrupted effectually the direct channel of communication between the city of New York and the country, and held at bay about five thousand British troops between the Heights and the city, under Lord Percy, who, if the Heights had been deserted and the way left open, would have pressed heavily upon the rear of the Americans during a march already rendered perilous by the near vicinity of the main body of General Howe's army on their right flank.

The retention of Fort Washington at that time, therefore, was not so unadvised a measure as might at first appear. But when, several days afterwards, whilst the American army was at White Plains, a British frigate and two transports passed up the Hudson, notwithstanding the opposition presented by the chevaux-de-frise and the two forts, thereby proving that the navigation of the river could not be obstructed, it would seem that the garrison ought to have been immediately withdrawn, and the works on the Heights abandoned. This was the opinion of General Washington, which he strongly expressed in a letter to General Greene; but the hopes of the latter were too sanguine, and hence the loss of the garrison.\*

When the army marched from Haerlem Heights, the division under General Lee was stationed near Kingsbridge, in order to guard and protect the rear; a position the most exposed to the enemy, and demanding the perpetual vigilance and caution of the commander. Nor was he contented with this duty only; he harassed the enemy's outposts. Three several detachments from his division skirmished with parties not inferior in force, and with such success as to prove,

\* An explanation of the particulars may be seen in Sparks's *Washington*. Vol. VI. p. 328; Vol. IX. p. 100.

in each instance, both the courage of the men and the good judgment with which these enterprises were planned. The movements of the army were extremely embarrassed by the deficiency of wagons and horses for transporting the baggage and artillery, whilst it was constantly open on its right wing to the assaults of the British columns, which were sometimes in sight. The march occupied three or four days. General Lee continued in the rear, affording an effectual protection; and at length brought up his division, and joined the main army at White Plains.

Washington here expected a general action, and was prepared to meet it; but, after looking him in the face for several days, Sir William Howe came to the conclusion, that the Americans were too strongly posted to allow him a fair prospect of success, and quietly drew off his troops towards Kingsbridge. As soon as his retreat was ascertained not to be a feint, no one could doubt his intention to transfer his operations to New Jersey, with the ultimate object of reaching Philadelphia. Washington resolved to cross the Hudson immediately, with all the troops belonging to the south of that river, and throw himself in the enemy's front, leaving General Lee with the eastern troops on the ground then occupied.

A detachment of three thousand men, under General Heath, was likewise ordered to Peekskill, for the defence of the passes in the Highlands. The number of troops left with General Lee was about seven thousand five hundred, but more than four thousand of these were militia, whose term of enlistment would expire very shortly. By his instructions, he was to cross the Hudson without delay, whenever it should be known that the British designed New Jersey to be the theatre of operations.

## CHAPTER X.

*Ordered to cross the Hudson and join the Army under Washington.—His Dispute with General Heath.—Marches into New Jersey.—Dilatory in obeying Orders.—Captured by the Enemy at Baskingridge.—Held as a Deserter, and closely confined.—Washington threatens Retaliation.—Allowed the Privilege of Parole.—Exchanged.—Resumes his Command in the Army at Valley Forge.*

THE fall of Fort Washington and Fort Lee opened the way for the anticipated schemes of Sir William Howe. He advanced into New Jersey. Washington retreated before him with an army daily dwindling away, by the expiration of the times for which the men had engaged to serve, till the number was reduced to less than three thousand. This critical situation required his whole disposable force to be united under his immediate command. He wrote to General Lee from Hackinsack, Newark, Brunswick, and Trenton, at first requesting him, and then urging and ordering him, to come forward with his troops as quickly as possible by such route as he might select.

General Lee was not idle at his post. He laid a plan for cutting off a detachment of the British, stationed near Mamaronec, under Colonel Rogers, celebrated for his exploits in the border conflicts of the last war. It was partly executed, but ultimately failed, in consequence of the enemy having left the ground before the arrival of the Americans. He was also active in endeavoring to prevail on the New England militia to remain a short time longer, using such arguments as might touch their patriotism and kindle their ardor. Very few were moved by his eloquence, or by the perils of their country; they nearly all went home.

As troops could overtake General Washington from

the Highlands more expeditiously than from White Plains, Lee requested General Heath to send forward two thousand men, whom he promised to replace by an equal number from his own division. Heath declined, alleging the positive tenor of his instructions from the Commander-in-chief. This refusal bred an unpleasant altercation between the two Generals; Lee insisting, that, being superior in rank, Heath was bound to obey his orders; and Heath maintaining that he held a separate command. Lee's sense of the matter was conveyed, without much show of courtesy in two or three caustic letters to Heath, in one of which he says, with characteristic impetuosity, "The Commander-in-chief is now separated from us. I, of course, command on this side of the water; and, for the future, I must and will be obeyed."\* These strong words were uttered without effect; Heath remained firm, and his decision was approved by Washington, who said it was not his intention to draw any of the troops from the Highlands.

Whatever motives may have caused General Lee's delay in the first instance, it is difficult to account for his tardiness afterwards. He lingered two or three weeks on the east side of the Hudson, and, after crossing the river with somewhat less than three thousand men, the militia having returned home, he proceeded very slowly, although continually pressed by messages from Washington to hasten his march. He advanced by way of Morristown to Baskingridge, where, on the 13th of December, ten days after he crossed the Hudson, he was captured by the enemy. The particulars of that event have been related by General Wilkinson, who was an eye-witness.

For reasons, which have not been explained, Lee took up his quarters for the night, with a small guard, at a house about three miles from the encampment of the army. A loyalist belonging to that neighborhood happened to pass the house in the evening, and ascertained that the General was there. He communicated the in-

\* MS. Letter, dated November 26th. See also Heath's *Memoirs*, pp. 88-96.

telligence to Colonel Harcourt, afterwards Earl Harcourt, a spirited British officer, at that time on a tour of observation in the country with a party of dragoons. General Lee had taken his breakfast the next morning, and just finished a letter to General Gates, who was then approaching from the north, with a body of troops, to join Washington. "At that moment," says Wilkinson, "I was looking out of an end window, down a lane about one hundred yards in length, which led to the house from the main road, when I discovered a party of British dragoons turning a corner of the avenue at a full charge. Startled at this unexpected spectacle, I exclaimed, 'Here, Sir, are the British cavalry!' 'Where?' replied the General, who had signed his letter at the instant. 'Around the house,' for they had opened files, and encompassed the building. General Lee appeared alarmed, yet collected, and his second observation marked his self-possession. 'Where is the guard? Why don't they fire?' And, after a moment's pause, he turned to me, and said, 'Do, Sir, see what has become of the guard.' I passed into a room at the opposite end of the house, where I had seen the guard in the morning. Here I discovered their arms, but the men were absent. I stepped out of the door, and perceived the dragoons chasing them in different directions." \*

The scene was soon closed. General Lee was mounted on a horse that stood at the door, without a hat, clad in a blanket-coat and slippers, and borne off in triumph to the British army at Brunswick.

In reviewing his conduct, from the time he was intrusted with a separate command at White Plains, it must be acknowledged that appearances are against him. As a military man, scrupulous in exacting obedience from others, it could not but excite suspicion that he should manifest so strange a backwardness in obeying the orders of his superior, especially as he possessed a perfect knowledge of the weak condition and extreme

\* Wilkinson's *Memoirs*, Vol. I. p. 105.



peril of the fugitive little army, which he was required to support. Washington, in one of his letters, expressed surprise that he had not heard from him for more than a week, although, he adds, "I have despatched daily expresses desiring to know when I might look for him." And Congress, nearly at the same time, instructed a committee "to send an express to General Lee, to know where, and in what situation, he and the army with him are."

It is moreover evident, that he had designs of his own, which were not consistent with a strict obedience of orders. It was his purpose to hang on the enemy's rear, and seize the first opportunity to strike a blow. On the 9th of December, he wrote from Chatham to General Heath, "I am in hopes here to reconquer the Jerseys; they were really in the hands of the enemy before my arrival." And, what must screen him from all suspicion of concealing his designs even from the Commander-in-chief, he conveyed the same idea in a letter to him the day before. Again, on the 11th of December, he wrote, "As General Lee thinks he can without great risk cross the Brunswick post-road, and, by a forced night's march, make his way to the ferry below Burlington, boats should be sent up from Philadelphia to receive him; but this scheme he only proposes, if the head of the enemy's column actually pass the river." This was his last communication to Washington before he was taken prisoner, and it is remarkable as showing no disposition to comply with the orders he had received.

It may be said, and perhaps with justice, that these aberrations do not prove any ill design on his part, although they expose him to the charge of neglect of duty as an officer. He might believe, and probably did believe, that he could render the most effectual service by striking the enemy's rear, thereby retarding, if not entirely arresting, the progress of the British army towards the Delaware. That he had ulterior views can only be matter of conjecture, founded on his ardent



temperament and aspiring ambition, which he never took pains to conceal. Hitherto he had discovered no symptoms of hostility to Washington, for the free remarks he had made concerning recent operations, and want of decision in the head, could scarcely be regarded as such. Any officer might innocently indulge himself in a similar latitude of opinion and speech. Whilst he was absent at the south, an intimate correspondence was kept up between them, as well of a private as of an official character; nor is there any evidence that, after his return, he did not possess the entire confidence of the Commander-in-chief.

It is true, nevertheless, that the letter to General Gates, mentioned above, breathes a spirit not perfectly accordant with feelings of friendship or disinterested motives. He writes, alluding to Washington, "He has thrown me into a situation, where I have my choice of difficulties. If I stay in this province, I risk myself and army; and if I do not stay, the province is lost forever. I have neither guides, cavalry, medicines, money, shoes, nor stockings. I must act with the greatest circumspection. Tories are in my front, rear, and on my flanks; the mass of the people is strangely contaminated. In short, unless something, which I do not expect, turns up, we are lost. Our counsels have been weak to the last degree." \* Now, in reality, there was no choice of difficulties. He was ordered to join the main army, which he knew had crossed the Delaware; and, by a quick march from the position he then held, he might in a single day have reached the river at a suitable crossing-place, without the slightest risk of being obstructed by the enemy, who were many miles below. He had no other task before him, than that of performing this march. As to the safety of the province, he was not required to protect it, nor was he answerable for consequences.

The capture of General Lee, at so critical a moment in public affairs, was deeply deplored by the army and

\* The whole letter is printed in Wilkinson's *Memoirs*, Vol. I. p. 108.

by the whole country. Aside from the mortification of losing the second officer of the army in such a manner, the zeal with which he had embraced and sustained the American cause had won the affections of the people; and his military reputation, especially his recent successes at the south, had confirmed their good opinion, and raised extravagant expectations of his future services.

The circumstances attending his capture, however, and the negligence with which he seemed to expose himself to the enemy, produced a reaction in some minds, and excited unfavorable suspicions. How was it possible, it was asked, for a man of his experience and ability to place himself in a situation where he could be seized by a handful of British dragoons, without even a show of resistance, unless he had previously resolved to become a voluntary captive, and had secretly concerted measures to this end with the enemy? In the vexation of a bitter disappointment, this suspicion, perhaps, was natural; but it was utterly unfounded. All the testimony confirms, that, up to the time of his capture, he was faithfully and assiduously devoted to the cause he had espoused.

Moreover, the treatment he at first received from the enemy affords a convincing proof of his having fallen into their hands by no good will on either side. Even the privilege of a prisoner of war was denied to him. Six days after he was brought to the British camp, Sir William Howe wrote to the minister, Lord George Germain, as follows: "General Lee, being considered in the light of a deserter, is kept a close prisoner; but I do not bring him to trial, as a doubt has arisen whether, by a public resignation of his half-pay, prior to his entry into the rebel army, he is still amenable to the military law as a deserter; upon which point I wait for information; and if the decision should be for trial on this ground, I beg to have the judges' opinion to lay before the court. Deserters are excluded in my agreement with the enemy for exchange of prisoners." The

minister replied, "As you have difficulties about bringing General Lee to trial in America, it is his Majesty's pleasure, that you send him to Great Britain by the first ship of war." The manner of his treatment was soon rumored abroad, and produced a strong sensation in the American army and people. General Washington partook of the common feeling, and felt it to be his duty to remonstrate and threaten retaliation.

"I am directed by Congress," he says, in a letter to General Howe, "to propose an exchange of five of the Hessian field-officers, taken at Trenton, for Major-General Lee; or, if this proposal should not be accepted, to demand his liberty upon parole, within certain bounds, as has ever been granted to your officers in our custody. I am informed, from good authority, that your reason for keeping him hitherto in stricter confinement than usual is, that you do not look upon him in the light of a common prisoner of war, but as a deserter from the British service, as his resignation was never accepted, and that you intend to try him as such by a court-martial. I will not undertake to determine how far this doctrine may be justifiable among yourselves; but I must give you warning, that Major-General Lee is looked upon as an officer belonging to, and under the protection of, the United Independent States of America, and that any violence you may commit on his life or liberty will be severely retaliated upon the lives or liberties of the British officers, or those of their foreign allies, at present in our hands."

Sir William Howe's answer was brief, couched in general terms, and unsatisfactory, promising only that the proceedings against General Lee "should not be precipitated." These words implied, that proceedings of some sort were intended. Congress immediately ordered five Hessian field-officers, and Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell, then a prisoner in Boston, to be taken into close custody, avowing the determination to retaliate on them the same punishment that should be inflicted on General Lee. This order was executed; the Hessian

officers were closely confined; and Colonel Campbell was thrown into a common jail at Concord, and treated in a manner reflecting no credit on the generous feelings of those who had him in charge, however it might evince their zeal for the honor and safety of their unfortunate general in the hands of the enemy.

Colonel Campbell was released from his harsh duress by the interference of Washington, who, in fact, did not approve the rigid construction which had been put upon the order of Congress, and who had no other aim than to retain the officers in custody, without the privilege of exchange, till the final decision of General Lee's case should be known.

In this state of things, Sir William Howe wrote again to the minister in a somewhat altered tone. "Washington declines to exchange the Hessian field-officers, taken at Trenton, or Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell, unless Lee is recognized as a prisoner of war. Lee is therefore retained for further instructions, being apprehensive, that a close confinement of the Hessian officers would be the consequence of sending Lee to Britain, and that this would occasion much discontent among the foreign troops." The minister took counsel of prudence, and replied, "His Majesty consents that Lee, having been struck off the half-pay list, shall, though deserving the most exemplary punishment, be deemed a prisoner of war, and he may be exchanged as such when you may think proper." This was nine months after General Lee's capture, during which time his fate was held in suspense; and it is evident, from the above extracts, that he owed his rescue to the firm stand taken in his behalf by the American Congress and the Commander-in-chief.

Justice to the character of General Howe requires it to be stated, however, that the rumor of his harsh treatment was unfounded. Although Lee was not permitted to go abroad on parole, yet he was furnished with comfortable apartments; and, in a letter written by his own hand to Robert Morris, then a member of

Congress, he says, "I have no occasion for money at present, as my table is very handsomely kept by the General, who has, indeed, treated me in all respects with kindness, generosity, and tenderness." When this letter was read in Congress, a resolve was passed directing the Hessian officers to be treated in the same manner.

In consequence of Lord George Germain's last letter General Lee was permitted to go abroad, on parole, anywhere within the limits of New York. Some time afterwards, he was transferred to Philadelphia, then in possession of the British. Here, on the 5th of April, 1778, his parole was enlarged, granting him liberty to go into the country beyond the British lines. He was exchanged early in the month of May, when he joined the American army at Valley Forge.

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## CHAPTER XI.

*Battle of Monmouth.—Lee opposes a general Action in a Council of War.—Takes Command of the advanced Division.—Engages the Enemy.—Retreats.—Interview with Washington.*

ABOUT the middle of June, the British evacuated Philadelphia, and Sir Henry Clinton began his march across New Jersey. His motions were, of course, closely watched by the Americans; and, without delay, Washington crossed the Delaware above Trenton. On the 24th of June, he arrived with his whole army at Hopewell, in New Jersey. On that day, a council of war was held, with the view of ascertaining the opinions of the officers as to future operations.

At the opening of the council, the Commander-in-chief stated the force of the enemy, according to the best information he could obtain, to be about ten thousand men. His own force then in camp amounted to ten

thousand six hundred and eighty-four rank and file, besides an advanced brigade of twelve hundred regular troops, and about the same number of militia, posted near the enemy, and hovering on their flanks and rear. In seven days, the retreating army had advanced only forty miles, their march having been retarded by breaking down the bridges and felling trees across the roads. Several questions were then propounded to the council, of which the one of chief importance was, "Will it be advisable for us, of choice, to hazard a general action?" A warm debate ensued; but, in the end, this question was decided in the negative by a majority of the officers. The opinion was nearly unanimous, however, that a detachment of fifteen hundred men should be sent to coöperate with those already near the enemy, in harassing their rear and flanks, and acting as circumstances might require.

Lee was strenuously opposed to a general action, on the ground of the disparity between the experience and discipline of the British troops and those who then composed the American army. His opinion was supposed to have much influence with some of the other officers. No one urged a general action, at all events; but several of them were of opinion, that such arrangements should be made as might bring it on, if a favorable opportunity should present itself.

Immediately after the council had dissolved, Greene, Lafayette, and Wayne, wrote separately to the Commander-in-chief, dissenting from the decision which a majority had approved, and giving their reasons for acting with more vigor. "I cannot help thinking," said Greene, "that we magnify our difficulties beyond realities. We are now in the most awkward situation in the world. We have come with great rapidity, until we have got near the enemy, and then our courage failed us, and we halted without attempting to do the enemy the least injury. People expect something from us, and our strength demands it. I am by no means for rash measures; but we must preserve our reputa-



tion. We can make a very serious impression without any great risk; and, if it should come to a general action, the chance is greatly in our favor."

Lafayette expressed similar sentiments, in language not less forcible. He recommended that at least twenty-five hundred or three thousand men should be sent to reënforce those already on the enemy's flanks and rear; and, if they should bring on a general engagement, he could not see why, "with ten thousand men, it was not proper to attack ten thousand English." Steuben, Du Portail, Wayne, and Paterson, accorded in these views; so that half of the whole number of general officers were in favor of bringing the enemy to an action, if circumstances should lead to such a result, although none of them seemed to consider it advisable to make a direct assault with that aim.

The Commander-in-chief was rather embarrassed than assisted by the council. After it was over, he probably agreed in opinion with Lafayette, who regretted that a council of war had been called, believing it not to have been "consistent with the good of the service, the advantage of the occasion, or, indeed, the authority of the Commander-in-chief." Washington was well aware that the public would never be satisfied, if, with a force superior in numbers to that of the enemy, he should suffer Sir Henry Clinton to march through the country, without attempting, at least, to strike such a blow as his strength would seem to justify. As the weight of responsibility rested on him, the counsels of his officers might guide his judgment, but not control his acts. He resolved to send out such a detachment as would harass the enemy, and check their progress, whilst, at the same time, he should march in person with the main body of his army, and take a position from which he could bring the whole into action, if an occasion should offer.

The command of the advanced troops belonged, of right, to General Lee. Disapproving the object, he manifested no eagerness to occupy this post of honor



due to his rank; nor did he hesitate to avow his conviction of the inexpediency of the plan, and of the ill consequences that would follow. At the solicitation of Lafayette, therefore, he consented to resign the command to that ardent and enterprising officer, who, with the approbation of Washington, was placed at the head of the advanced troops.

After a little time for reflection, however, General Lee changed his mind. In a letter to the Commander-in-chief, the next day, he says, "When I first assented to the Marquis de Lafayette's taking command of the present detachment, I confess I viewed it in a very different light from that in which I view it at present. I considered it as a more proper business of a young, volunteering General, than of the second in command in the army; but I find it is considered in a different manner. They say that a corps, consisting of six thousand men, is undoubtedly the most honorable command, next to the Commander-in-chief; that my ceding it would, of course, have an odd appearance. I must entreat, therefore, after making a thousand apologies for the trouble my rash assent has occasioned you, that, if this detachment does march, I may have the command of it."

Before this letter was received, Lafayette had already marched towards the enemy, now but a few miles from the American camp. Washington complied with General Lee's request, and reinstated him in the command; explaining the circumstances to Lafayette, who at once, with the cheerfulness with which he ever submitted to any personal sacrifice for the public service, acquiesced in the change.

General Lee took with him two additional brigades; and the whole number of troops under his command, when he arrived at Englishtown, in the rear of the enemy, was about five thousand. At the distance of three miles, still further in the rear, was the main army, under Washington, ready to support the advanced division at the shortest notice.

During the night, General Washington learned that the British were encamped in open grounds near Monmouth Court House, four or five miles in advance of Lee; and he resolved to attack them as soon as they should begin their march. Lee was ordered to make his dispositions accordingly, and to keep his men lying on their arms. At five o'clock the next morning, June 28th, intelligence was received that the enemy's front was in motion; and Washington immediately despatched an aid-de-camp to Lee, directing him to move on and begin the attack, "unless there should be very powerful reasons to the contrary;" informing him, at the same time, that the second division would come up to his support.

These orders were promptly executed by General Lee, and his division reached the ground, where the British had encamped the night before, soon after they had left it, the rear column being still in sight. On reconnoitring this column, he judged it to be a covering party, and to consist of fifteen hundred or two thousand men, occupying a plain about a mile in breadth, between Monmouth Court House and the heights on the left. He then ordered General Wayne to file off and attack them in the rear, not vigorously, but as a feint, with the design of keeping them on the ground, while Grayson's, Scott's, and Maxwell's brigades should march through a wood on the left, for the purpose of cutting off this party, and bringing it between two fires.

Much time was spent in making these arrangements, owing to the nature of the grounds, intersected in some parts by ravines, and in others covered with wood. There was very little firing on either side, except a slight skirmish with Colonel Butler's regiment, and a cannonade kept up, for some time, from a few pieces of artillery under Colonel Oswald.

Meantime, Sir Henry Clinton, learning the situation of his rear, brought back a reënforcement. This was done without the knowledge of Lee, as it was not

within the range of his observation. He only perceived, upon reconnoitring, that the enemy's force was larger than he had at first supposed. His plan for cutting off the rear, however, was thus defeated. He resolved, nevertheless, to hazard an engagement on that ground, which was the last he would have chosen, having a morass in his rear that would contract his movements, and embarrass his retreat, in case he should be pushed by the enemy.

Whilst he was making the proper dispositions for this object in front and on the right, Scott moved from the wood on the left towards the plain without orders, and, deceived by a column which he saw marching in an oblique direction towards the Court House across the plain, and which he thought was retreating, he likewise began to retreat. When this was made known to General Lee, he expressed great surprise and disapprobation; but Scott had passed a ravine, and it was too late to correct the error without exposing his army to imminent hazard, as the enemy were near at hand. A retreat had thus begun without the knowledge, and against the intention, of General Lee. In the present conjuncture, however, he deemed it necessary to order a general retreat, and to form his troops on more advantageous ground in the rear. When he had marched back about two and a half miles, continually pressed by the enemy, with occasional skirmishes, and whilst his front columns were just beginning to gain the high grounds where he intended to form them and oppose the enemy, he was met by General Washington. This was at about twelve o'clock.

Having heard the cannonade, and believing, from previous intelligence, that Lee had engaged the enemy, Washington had put the second division in motion, and was marching to his support. Lee had strangely neglected to send him any notice of the retreat, although it had occupied nearly two hours; nor was it known to Washington, till he met some of the stragglers in advance of the retreating troops. His astonishment may

well be imagined. In a state of excited feeling, which the occasion could not fail to produce, he rode rapidly to the rear of the retreating columns, where he found General Lee. The interview is described by Lee himself in his defence before the court-martial.

“When I arrived first in his presence, conscious of having done nothing which could draw on me the least censure, but rather flattering myself with his congratulation and applause, I confess I was disconcerted, astonished, and confounded by the words and manner in which his Excellency accosted me. It was so novel and unexpected from a man, whose discretion, humanity, and decorum I had from the first of our acquaintance stood in admiration of, that I was for some time unable to make any coherent answer to questions so abrupt, and in a great measure to me unintelligible. The terms, I think, were these. ‘I desire to know, Sir, what is the reason, whence arises this disorder and confusion.’ The manner in which he expressed them was much stronger and more severe than the expressions themselves. When I recovered myself sufficiently, I answered that I saw or knew of no confusion but what naturally arose from disobedience of orders, contradictory intelligence, and the impertinence and presumption of individuals, who were invested with no authority, intruding themselves in matters above them and out of their sphere; that the retreat in the first instance was contrary to my intentions, contrary to my orders, and contrary to my wishes.”

Washington replied, that all this might be true, but he ought not to have undertaken the enterprise, unless he intended to go through with it. He then rode away, and ordered some of the retreating regiments to be formed on the ground which he pointed out. In a short time he again returned, and asked Lee if he would take the command in that place. Lee assented, saying that the command had before been given to him. “I expect, then,” said Washington, “that measures will immediately be taken to check the enemy;” to which

Lee made answer, that "his orders should be obeyed, and he would be the last to leave the field." Washington rode back to the rear division, and prepared to bring it into action.

Lee executed the orders he had just received with promptness and energy. The troops were formed in the face of the enemy; a sharp conflict ensued, which he sustained with firmness, and finally brought off his troops in good order, while the main army was forming in the rear. When General Washington came up to him a second time, Lee said, "Here, Sir, are my troops; how is it your pleasure that I should dispose of them?" He was directed to arrange them at Englishtown. This was three miles from the scene of action. On Lee's arrival, he found General Steuben engaged in the duty assigned to him, and of course his presence was not necessary. He went back to the field, and offered his services to the Commander-in-chief wherever they might be required. How he was employed is uncertain, for no more is heard of him during the day.

A general action immediately followed, which was kept up without intermission till darkness separated the combatants. The American troops lay on their arms through the night, expecting to renew the engagement in the morning. They were disappointed in this expectation. The British, having no other object than a quick and safe passage to Sandy Hook, whence they would be conveyed to New York by water, marched away silently in the night, and joined their front division, which had charge of the long train of baggage brought from Philadelphia.

## CHAPTER XII.

*Correspondence between Lee and Washington.—Lee's Arrest.—Charges.—Trial by a Court-Martial.—Remarks on the Testimony, and on the Decision of the Court.*

THE affair at Monmouth caused the ruin of General Lee. Whatever may be thought of his motives or his conduct in the part he acted, his precipitancy and rashness afterwards brought him into difficulties, which thickened as he advanced, and from which it was never in his power to extricate himself. It was natural that he should be wounded and mortified by the events of the day; but he fell upon the most indiscreet method imaginable for obtaining redress, even admitting his grievances to have been as great as he would make them. Instead of a calm appeal to the public, by requesting, in respectful terms, a court of inquiry, he wrote vehement letters to the Commander-in-chief, breathing a spirit, and manifesting a temper, which none could approve, and many would condemn. He thereby lost, at the outset, the advantage gained by dignity and self-command in supporting even a just cause, and laid himself open on every side to suspicion, prejudice, and censure. Two days after the battle, while the army was at Englishtown, he wrote as follows to Washington.

“From the knowledge I have of your Excellency's character, I must conclude that nothing but the misinformation of some very stupid, or misrepresentation of some very wicked person, could have occasioned your making use of so very singular expressions as you did on my coming up to the ground where you had taken post. They implied that I was guilty either of disobedience of orders, want of conduct, or want of courage. Your Excellency will therefore infinitely oblige me, by letting me know on which of these articles you ground



your charge, that I may prepare for my justification, which I have the happiness to be confident I can do to the army, to the Congress, to America, and to the world in general. Your Excellency must give me leave to observe, that neither yourself, nor those about your person, could, from your situation, be in the least judges of the merits or demerits of our manœuvres; and, to speak with a becoming pride, I can assert that to these manœuvres the success of the day was entirely owing. I can boldly say that, had we remained on the first ground, or had we advanced, or had the retreat been conducted in a manner different from what it was, this whole army, and the interests of America, would have risked being sacrificed.

“I ever had, and hope I ever shall have, the greatest respect and veneration for General Washington. I think him endowed with many great and good qualities; but in this instance I must pronounce, that he has been guilty of an act of cruel injustice towards a man, who certainly has some pretensions to the regard of every servant of this country. And I think, Sir, I have a right to demand some reparation for the injury committed; and, unless I can obtain it, I must in justice to myself, when this campaign is closed, which I believe will close the war, retire from a service at the head of which is placed a man capable of offering such injuries. But at the same time, in justice to you, I must repeat that I from my soul believe, that it was not a motion of your own breast, but instigated by some of those dirty earwigs, who will forever insinuate themselves near persons in high office; for I really am convinced, that when General Washington acts from himself, no man in his army will have reason to complain of injustice or indecorum.”

Washington replied, “I have received your letter, expressed, as I conceive, in terms highly improper. I am not conscious of having made use of any very singular expressions at the time of meeting you, as you intimate. What I recollect to have said was dictated by



duty, and warranted by the occasion. As soon as circumstances will permit, you shall have an opportunity of justifying yourself to the army, to Congress, to America, and to the world in general, or of convincing them that you were guilty of a breach of orders, and of misbehavior before the enemy, on the 28th instant, in not attacking them as you had been directed, and in making an unnecessary, disorderly, and shameful retreat."

To this brief answer, General Lee returned another still more brief. "You cannot afford me greater pleasure, Sir, than in giving me an opportunity of showing to America the sufficiency of her respective servants. I trust that the temporary power of office, and the tinsel dignity attending it, will not be able, by all the mists they can raise, to offuscate the bright rays of truth. In the mean time, your Excellency can have no objection to my retiring from the army."

He was put under arrest the same day, and a copy of the charges was presented to him. He had requested that he might be brought to trial before a court-martial without delay. The charges were, "First, Disobedience of orders in not attacking the enemy on the 28th of June, agreeably to repeated instructions; Secondly, Misbehavior before the enemy on the same day, by making an unnecessary, disorderly, and shameful retreat; Thirdly, Disrespect to the Commander-in-chief, in two letters." A court-martial was convened on the 4th of July, consisting of five general officers and eight colonels. Lord Stirling was the president. The proceedings of the court were retarded by the march of the army, and they were not closed till the 12th of August.

Nearly all the officers of rank, who acted under General Lee, were examined. The testimony is voluminous, and encumbered with a body of details which, when taken in the mass, convey but a confused idea of the manœuvres of the day to one who looks at them only through this medium. The subject was evidently sifted

to the bottom. General Lee's defence before the court, and his remarks on the evidence, are ingenious and able, but more tinctured with bold and pungent expressions, which abound in his other compositions, than was perhaps expedient on such an occasion. The court found him guilty upon all the charges; modifying the second, however, by leaving out the word "shameful," and deciding the retreat to have been "in some instances" disorderly. He was sentenced to be suspended from any command in the army for twelve months.\*

For the result of the trial and this heavy sentence, General Lee appears to have been wholly unprepared. Either from a conviction of his innocence, a too sanguine temperament, confidence in the weight of his character, or all these combined, he had cherished the belief that he should at least be cleared from the first two charges. And, indeed, whoever will now examine the testimony, and rely alone on the facts there stated for the grounds of his judgment, will not easily discover the proofs by which the charges were sustained in the minds of the officers who constituted the court.

In the first place, the orders for attacking the enemy were discretionary. He was not required to attack at all hazards, but only in case there should not be powerful reasons to the contrary, and of these reasons he must of course be the judge; although he could not doubt that an attack was the principle upon which General Washington intended him to act. Lee insisted that an officer could not strictly be chargeable with disobedience of a discretionary order.

\* Congress ordered one hundred copies of the proceedings of the court-martial to be printed for the use of the members. In the year 1823, Mr. Jacob Morris, a friend of General Lee, who was a volunteer in a troop of dragoons at the battle of Monmouth, caused an edition to be published at Cooperstown, in the state of New York. In his notice to the public, prefixed to the volume, Mr. Morris says, "To do justice to the memory of a gallant, frank, and warm-hearted soldier of the revolution, who, although not a native born American, was surpassed by few of that eventful period in zeal and devotion to the cause of this country, I have directed to be republished the proceedings of the court-martial, that decided on the conduct of General Lee at the battle of Monmouth." In his opinion, the proceedings will prove, to a dispassionate reader of the present day, that General Lee "was harshly dealt by."

Again, there was positive proof that he did attack the enemy, and that his first manœuvres were designed to cut off their rear-guard. And even after this part of the enemy's force was ascertained to be much larger than was at first supposed, he was still pursuing the same design, when the detachments on his left began to retreat without his orders, till they had arrived in such a position as would render it hazardous to reverse their movement in the face of the enemy, and bring them into action on the ground then occupied. In this state of things he ordered, or rather allowed, a general retreat, for it does not appear by the testimony that any officer at that time received from General Lee a positive order to retreat. He declared it to have been his intention to form the retreating troops on the first suitable ground, and meet the enemy there; but no such ground came in his way, till he met General Washington.

The testimony contains nothing at variance with this declaration. He maintained, moreover, that the retreat was a fortunate accident, because the main army was then five or six miles in his rear, and could not have come up in season to afford him the requisite support while engaged with the superior force of the British on disadvantageous ground, especially as the enemy's cavalry was numerous, and could act with facility on both his wings. He claimed merit, therefore, for having brought off his troops without loss to a position in which they were enabled to join in the general action of the day.

As to the retreat being disorderly, the case was not made out very clearly before the court. Some of the witnesses said they saw regiments in disorder, but no officer declared his own troops to have been in that condition. Others said the troops seen by them were marching in good order. The truth seems to have been, that the extreme heat of the weather, the consequent fatigue of the men, and the nature of the ground, caused some of the troops to move in a scat-

tered manner; whilst others, under more favorable circumstances, marched regularly and in a compact form. Not a single regiment was cut off or essentially molested by the enemy; they were all formed without difficulty at the end of their march; and these facts would not seem to indicate so great a disorder as to render the commander culpable.

General Lee was guilty of one fault, however, which admitted of no defence or palliation; the neglect to send to the Commander-in-chief intelligence of the retrograde movement of the troops. With the enemy pressing closely upon his rear, he was marching directly into the front of the other division without giving the least notice of his approach. This negligence might have produced fatal consequences to both divisions of the army. On this point General Lee's explanation is lame and inconclusive. The degree of censure it deserved must depend on his motives, which cannot be known; but the act itself was undoubtedly censurable.

It is evident, from the testimony, that a strong prejudice against General Lee existed among the officers, and probably in the great body of the army, whilst the trial was in progress. This was owing mainly to his own imprudence. His conversation after he left the field was extremely indiscreet; reports of this conversation went abroad, and were even allowed to be produced in evidence before the court. He talked freely and openly of the inferiority of the American troops in discipline and cavalry to those under Sir Henry Clinton, of his opposition to a general attack from the beginning, and of the rashness and inexpediency of such a measure when the independence of America was secured by the recent alliance with France. He also censured General Washington for ordering an attack after the decision of a council of war against it. These ideas were so little accordant with the known spirit and military ardor of General Lee, with his eagerness on all occasions for distinction in arms, that

his sincerity seemed questionable to many, and secret motives of a personal nature were surmised to lie at the bottom.

His state of mind, and manner of speech, may be understood by an extract from a letter to Joseph Reed, President of Pennsylvania, dated July 22d, while the trial was pending.

“ You tell me I have much sunk in public esteem and confidence. All I can say in reply is, if a community, for whom I have sacrificed everything, can so easily form conclusions, they, and not I, are the immediate objects of compassion. You tell me this is a time I have occasion for friends. As a man of society, I wish, and ever did wish, for a number of friends, the greater the number the more the honor and pleasure; but if you mean friends to support my cause on the present occasion, I despise the thought; I ask only for common justice. I am conscious that nothing but cabal, artifices, powers, and iniquity, can tarnish my name for a moment; but, if they are to prevail on the community, as to myself, *impavidum ferient ruinae*. No attack, it seems, can be made on General Washington, but it must recoil on the assailant. I never entertained the most distant wish or intention of attacking General Washington; I have ever honored and respected him as a man and a citizen; but, if the circle which surrounds him chooses to erect him into an infallible divinity, I shall certainly prove a heretic; and if, great as he is, he can attempt wounding everything I ought to hold dear, he must thank his priests if his deityship gets scratched in the scuffle.

“ When you say I have now put it out of the power of my friends, in and out of Congress, to offer a word in my defence, upon my honor I know not what you mean. I repeat, I demand nothing from the public but justice. I have been grossly, villanously dealt with, and the dread of no power on earth shall prevent me from exposing the wickedness of my persecutors. I wish not to attack; but must, it is my duty to defend.

If this is thought dangerous, I must observe that the blood and treasure expended in this war have been expended in vain; as North and Mansfield, if they had succeeded, could not possibly have established a more odious despotism."

From the impatience of his temper, and his high spirit, we may presume he did not refrain from expressing sentiments of a similar import in camp and to his other correspondents; and these sentiments were certainly not of a kind to conciliate public favor, or the good will of those around him. The disrespectful and even insulting language, which he had allowed himself to use in his two letters to Washington, could not be overlooked nor easily forgiven. Such was the hold which Washington had gained on the affections of the army and of the whole people, after a long experience of his ability and public virtue, and such was believed to be the importance to the country of maintaining him in the high position in which his character and the voice of the nation had placed him, that so bold an assault was accounted little less than treason to the American cause. These impressions and facts, connected with Lee's disregard of orders before his capture, which was now remembered against him, helped to foster the apprehension of a sinister design, on his part, to effect the ruin of Washington, with the ambitious hope of becoming his successor. Without impeaching the fidelity or candor of the members of the court, therefore, it may reasonably be supposed that the influences on their minds, derived from these considerations, may have thrown a stronger coloring upon the testimony against General Lee, in regard to the first two charges, than would be seen by one who now looks simply at the facts of the case recorded in the testimony itself.\*

\* General Lee maintained, that the two letters ought never to have been submitted to the consideration of the court-martial. "Most certainly," he says, "they do not come under the articles of war, the intention of which is to restrain officers and soldiers from writing or speaking disrespectfully of the Commander-in-chief. These letters were private letters of remonstrance and expostulation, betwixt officer and officer, for injuries conceived to have been offered, and ought to have been considered as such only." No other



The question may be asked, why Washington should prefer such charges, if there were not the clearest positive proofs for sustaining them. This question has been answered by Chief Justice Marshall. "Previous to the arrest, and to the answer given to the first letter received from General Lee, accusations against his conduct had been made by several officers of his detachment, and particularly by Generals Wayne and Scott, in which the transactions of the day, not being well understood, were represented in colors much more unfavorable to Lee than those which, on a full investigation, they afterwards wore. These representations, most probably, produced the strength of the expressions contained in the second article of the charge." \* It should be remembered, also, that neither Wayne nor any other officer, at the time the charges were issued, was acquainted with all the plans and movements of the Commander, nor with the important circumstance of the rear division of the enemy being much enlarged by a detachment from the main army, during General Lee's manœuvres before the retreat.

But, in whatever light we may now view the subject, it is certain the decision of the court met with entire approbation from the army and the public generally. The tide of popular favor, which had run so high in the first year of the war, and which, indeed, had continued without much diminution till the battle of Monmouth, was now effectually turned. And in producing this change, General Lee's indiscretions had been chiefly instrumental; they inflamed the public mind, and rendered his trial necessary. There is no reason for supposing that General Washington intended to take any official notice of his conduct on the field of Monmouth, if he had not been driven to it by the rash and imperious tone of the unfortunate letters. The

person, probably, would entertain this opinion. The letters related to public transactions, and must have been intended by the writer to produce an impression on the public.

\* Marshall's *Life of Washington*, Vol. III. p. 481.



events of that day would have been left to tell their own story, and to make such impressions on the minds of men as their merits or demerits deserved.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

*Decision of the Court-Martial laid before Congress.—Confirmed, after much Delay.—Lee retires to his Estate in Virginia.—His Manner of Life.—Writes Political and Military Queries.—Washington's Remarks on them.—Lee resigns his Commission in the Army, which is accepted by Congress.*

THE proceedings of the court-martial were not final; they were to be approved or set aside by Congress. Leaving the army, General Lee repaired to Philadelphia, intending there to await the issue, apparently confident that the decision would be reversed. While on his way, he wrote to his friend, Dr. Rush, in language sufficiently expressive of his opinion of the court.

"I find that you are not thoroughly persuaded of the propriety of my conduct on the 28th of June. Your letter implies that I did blunder. Now, if I did, I am incorrigible; for I declare solemnly, if the transactions of that day were to be done over again, I should do just the same. I aver, that my conduct was in every respect irreproachable; that it will stand the strictest scrutiny of every judge. I aver, that my court-martial was a court of inquisition; that there was not a single member with a military idea, at least if I may pronounce from the different questions they put to the evidences. And I may with all charity pronounce, that, if they could have proved that I had only, in the course of the day, uttered the word *retreat*, they would have sentenced me to an ignominious death, or at least cashiered me with infamy. But this retreat, though necessary, was fortunately brought about con-

trary to my orders, contrary to my intention; and, if anything can deduct from my credit, it is that I did not order a retreat which was so necessary."

Such effusions of imbittered feeling, uttered, as they probably were, in the ear of every willing listener, while the matter was still in suspense, were not likely to increase the number of his friends, or gain advocates for his cause. In the present condition of his affairs, a dignified reserve, in regard to himself and his opponents, and a calm explanation and defence of his conduct, would have opened a more direct channel to the sympathy of the public; or, if he was too proud to seek for sympathy, such a course would more readily have unbarred to him the gates of justice, the end at which he professed to aim. There are times when the stoutest and bravest heart must yield to the necessity of circumstances, and take a lesson from the humble virtues of prudence and submission. Such was now the situation of General Lee. He could not control his destiny, and he was unequal to the task of so far controlling himself as to submit to it. His haughty spirit, irritable temper, and resolute self-confidence, bore him away on the tide of his ill fortune, till he was plunged into embarrassments from which he could not escape.

He betrayed much impatience, and apparently not without reason, at the delay of Congress in coming to a final decision on the proceedings of the court-martial. The subject was kept in suspense by that body more than three months. During this delay, General Lee wrote a respectful letter to the President, representing the delicacy of his situation, and urging speedy action. "An additional motive for requesting it," he says, "is, that I find the Congress is every day growing thinner; and I confess I could most ardently wish that the Congress was not only as complete as possible, but that, if it were agreeable to the rules of the house, the people at large might be admitted to form an audience, when the discussion is entered into of the justice or iniquity,

wisdom or absurdity, of the sentence that has been passed upon me." The affair was brought under discussion at nine different times. As the Old Congress always sat with closed doors, neither the substance nor tenor of the debates was known abroad. At length, on the 5th of December, the sentence of the court-martial was confirmed by a majority of the members then present. It was, indeed, a thin house, consisting of only twenty-one members, of whom twenty voted, thirteen in the affirmative, and seven in the negative. Several members had left Congress while the subject was under consideration.\*

The debates were understood to have been warm as well as protracted. The spirit engendered the year before, by *Conway's Cabal*, with which the national counsels are known to have been more or less contaminated, was not as yet wholly laid to rest. It was the purpose of that restless and ambitious officer, and his associates, to drive Washington from the command of the army, either by worrying him into resignation, or by raising the popular cry against him to such a pitch, as to make his dismissal from the service necessary. This treacherous attempt signally failed, but not till it had worked much mischief, by inflaming the passions of

\* After the proceedings of the court-martial had been laid before Congress, General Lee forwarded the testimony of Major Clarke, which, by some oversight, had not been rendered to the court. The testimony, probably as being out of order, was not admitted by Congress. Major Clarke came to General Lee, with orders from General Washington, just at the time the retreat began. The orders were, that "he should annoy the enemy as much as in his power, but at the same time should proceed with caution." Major Clarke understood the orders to be discretionary. General Lee told him to inform the Commander-in-chief, that, "by too much precipitancy in one of his brigadiers, and false intelligence, his troops were thrown into confusion, and he was retreating." Major Clarke affirms, that he delivered this message to Washington. There was no proof before the court of such a message having been delivered: and, in fact, General Lee did not allege, in his defence, that he had sent to Washington any notice of his retreat. In the hurry of the moment, it had probably escaped his recollection. It is certain that the message was not delivered to Washington in such a manner as to convey to him any intelligence of a retreat, and it is also certain that General Lee himself had no remembrance of such a message.

The members of Congress, who voted against confirming the sentence of the court-martial, were Whipple of New Hampshire, Samuel Adams and Lovell of Massachusetts, Carmichael of Maryland, Smith of Virginia, Harnett of North Carolina, and Langworthy of Georgia.

men and the violence of party, both in the army and in Congress. The brilliant achievement of the American arms at Saratoga had thrown an accidental lustre around the name of Gates, and he was ostensibly put forward by the cabal as successor to the Commander-in-chief; but General Lee was believed to be the man really intended for that important station.

It must be remembered, however, that he was at this time a close prisoner in New York, and could not have been personally concerned in any of these schemes of faction and treachery. But he had the imprudence, while his case was before Congress, to write for the newspapers a defence of Conway, who had been discharged from the public service with disgrace; and although this performance was published without his name, yet it possessed so many of the characteristics of his style and manner of thinking and talking, that no one could mistake the authorship. These circumstances may have affected in some degree the debates in Congress, and the ultimate decision of that body.

Meantime, General Lee's warmth of temper and unguarded language involved him in other difficulties. He could not conceal his resentments, nor refrain from giving utterance, on all occasions, to his secret thoughts and exasperated feelings. He spoke of Washington in terms of censure and abuse, which, even if warranted in his own opinion, could not fail to react upon himself and to the injury of his cause. Colonel Laurens, one of Washington's aids, distinguished for his chivalrous spirit and many high traits of character, took this license of speech in serious part, and demanded the satisfaction to which he said he was entitled by the near relation in which he stood to the Commander-in-chief. General Lee promptly accepted the challenge; a duel was fought with pistols, and he was wounded in the side.

Soon afterwards, with more reason for his support, he became embroiled in another quarrel. William Henry Drayton, Chief Justice of South Carolina, in a charge to the grand jury, the year before, took occasion to go out

of his way, very unnecessarily as it would seem, to censure General Lee's conduct in his march through New Jersey, accusing him of disobedience of orders. It certainly does not appear what a grand jury in South Carolina had to do with this question, nor upon what pretext a public functionary in a civil line should bring such an accusation, till the case had been examined by a military tribunal.

General Lee naturally felt himself injured, and called on Mr. Drayton, then a member of Congress, for an explanation. The latter answered, that he had spoken only what he believed to be true, and if General Lee would convince him to the contrary, he would retract the charge. This answer was not such as to satisfy the claims of wounded honor, or to calm a fiery spirit, especially as Mr. Drayton had been one of his most active and determined adversaries in Congress; and Lee wrote him another letter, copiously seasoned with pointed and pungent expressions, which he knew so well how to use. Of this letter Mr. Drayton took no notice; indeed, his friends say he sent it back unopened. Despairing of any other remedy, Lee, in military phrase, demanded satisfaction. Mr. Drayton declined the challenge, on the ground, that duelling did not comport with his situation as a judge and member of Congress, and that he was not bound to "sacrifice his public reputation, and outrage his public character, merely to gratify General Lee in the line of his profession." Most persons will approve this decision; but few will think he acted a just or strictly honorable part, when, in his official capacity, he voluntarily uttered a public censure upon a man for a grave delinquency in a high trust, who had not been called to account by his superiors, who was in no possible degree amenable to the grand jury of South Carolina for what he had done, and who was then a close prisoner with the enemy, unable to defend or explain his conduct.\*

Lee remained in Philadelphia two or three months

\* John Drayton's *Memoirs of the Revolution*, Vol. I. p. xxiii.

after his case was decided by Congress, and then retired to his estate in Berkeley county, Virginia, which he called *Prato Rio*. Here he lived more like a hermit than a citizen of the world, or the member of a civilized community. His house was little more than a shell, without partitions, and containing scarcely the necessary articles of furniture for the most common uses. To a gentleman, who visited him in this forlorn retreat, where he found a kitchen in one corner, a bed in another, books in a third, saddles and harness in a fourth, Lee said, "Sir, it is the most convenient and economical establishment in the world. The lines of chalk, which you see on the floor, mark the divisions of the apartments, and I can sit in any corner, and give orders, and overlook the whole, without moving from my chair."

One of his foibles was a passionate fondness for horses and dogs; and even during his visits, travels, and campaigns, his faithful dogs were his constant companions, sometimes to the discomfort of his host, and to the terror of ladies who prided themselves upon the neatness of their carpets and rugs. To a friend, who rallied him on this point, he wrote from camp, in his most prosperous days, "I am called whimsical, and a lover of dogs. As to the former charge, I am heartily glad it is my character; for, until the common routine of mankind is mended, I shall wish to remain and be thought eccentric; and, when my honest quadruped friends are equalled by the bipeds in fidelity, gratitude, or good sense, I will promise to become as warm a philanthropist as Mr. Addison himself affected to be. It certainly appears paradoxical, but, if you will examine history, you will find all, or almost all, the enthusiasts for general liberty had the reputation of being cynically disposed." It is but fair to say, however, that in this description he hardly does himself justice. He had great colloquial powers, and there are abundant proofs of his having been a most agreeable companion to those whose society he sought. Eccentric he always was, more from nature than study, and for the most part in



a way rather to amuse than offend his associates. In the solitude he had now chosen for himself, however, he unquestionably secured the advantage of following the bent of his humor without restraint, and of enjoying to his heart's content the company of his dogs, his cynical disposition, and his whimsical eccentricities.

But these resources for the employment of his thoughts did not prevent him from brooding over his misfortunes, and cherishing in his bosom the bitter recollection of his real or imagined wrongs. He made little effort, apparently, to stifle his resentments, and less to submit with patience to his wayward fate. Three months after his retirement, he wrote *Queries, Political and Military*, which begin with certain abstract propositions on the nature of civil liberty, but chiefly consist of hints and questions on some of the events of the war; the drift of the whole being to cast a slur upon the character and military conduct of Washington.

These *Queries* were designed for publication in Philadelphia, but no printer was courageous enough to admit them into his paper. At length they found a place in the *Maryland Journal*, published at Baltimore. The citizens were thrown into a ferment by what they deemed an audacious and unjust attack upon a man revered for his many virtues, elevated by his public station, and with whose good name the highest interests of the country were interwoven. To shield himself from the effects of popular indignation, the printer acknowledged his error, and gave up the name of the author. Setting aside the temper and design of this performance, it was extremely ill-timed and impolitic in regard to the writer himself; he could gain nothing, but might lose much, by adding fuel to the flame he had already kindled, and putting new weapons into the hands of his enemies. He did not reflect that, although his spirit had not been broken by his hard fortune, yet his position in the eye of the public was changed; and that, to a man in his situation, defiance and hardihood were



the last methods by which he could hope to win back the favor he had lost, or to establish his cause on the broad basis of right and justice.\*

Of the monotonous life led by General Lee in his seclusion, few incidents are known. During the first year, he seldom left his estate. For some time he talked of going to Europe, and abandoning forever a country from which he had received only ingratitude and unjust reproach, in return for his many sacrifices and devoted service. This resolution, if ever seriously formed, was gradually relinquished. One bright spot in this year's history is worthy of notice. He wrote a complimentary letter to General Wayne, on the victory gained by the latter at Stony Point. A friendly correspondence ensued. Wayne had been his most forward and decided opponent in the affair of Monmouth. Lee's readiness to applaud his merit on a subsequent occasion, and to preserve a continuance of his friendship, is a proof that he was not implacable, nor always led away by passion.

Another incident, however, wears a different complexion. The term of his suspension from the service had expired, and it is not probable that he intended again to join the army. A rumor came to his ear, in-

\*After Washington had read the *Queries*, he wrote to a friend, "The motives, which actuate this gentleman, can better be accounted for by himself than by me. If he can produce a single instance in which I have mentioned his name, after his trial commenced, where it was in my power to avoid it, and, when it was not, where I have done it with the smallest degree of acrimony or disrespect, I will consent that the world shall view my character in as disreputable a light as he wishes to place it. What cause there is, then, for such a profusion of venom as he is emitting upon all occasions, unless by an act of public duty, in bringing him to trial at his own solicitation, I have disappointed him and raised his ire; or he conceives that, in proportion as he can darken the shades of my character, he illuminates his own; whether these, I say, or motives still more hidden and dark, govern him, I shall not undertake to decide." Sparks's *Washington*, Vol. VI. p. 311.

On another occasion, commenting likewise on a publication of a similar stamp by General Lee, he said, "If he conceives that I was opposed to him, because he found himself disposed to enter into a party against me; if he thought I stood in his road to preferment, and that it was therefore convenient to lessen me in the esteem of my countrymen, in order to pave the way for his own advancement, I have only to observe that, as I never entertained any jealousy of him, so neither did I ever do more than common civility and proper respect to his rank required, to conciliate his good opinion. His temper and plans were too versatile and violent to attract my admiration." *Ibid.* p. 133.

timating a design of Congress to deprive him of his commission. In the heat of the moment, with characteristic precipitancy, he indited the following brief epistle, without date, and despatched it to the President of Congress.

“BERKELEY COUNTY.

“SIR,

“I understand that it is in contemplation of Congress, on the principle of economy, to strike me out of their service. Congress must know very little of me, if they suppose that I would accept of their money, since the confirmation of the wicked and infamous sentence which was passed upon me.

“I am, Sir, &c.

“CHARLES LEE.”

One measure only could, of course, be adopted on the receipt of this letter, which was a resolution, “That Major-General Charles Lee be informed that Congress have no further occasion for his services in the army of the United States.” This intelligence could not surprise General Lee after his communication to the President. His answer demands notice, as being written in a more considerate tone, and exhibiting his character in a more amiable light, than had of late appeared either in his compositions or conduct.

“BERKELEY COUNTY, January 30th, 1780.

“SIR,

“I have this day received your letter, with my dismissal from the service of the United States; nor can I complain of it as an act of injustice. The greatest respect is indispensably due to every public body of men, and, above all, to those who are the representatives, and at the same time the legislature, of a free people; and I ingenuously confess that the note which I dictated was so far from being dressed in terms properly respectful, that they were highly improper, disrespectful, and even contumacious. But, although I do not mean to justify the measure, I flatter myself

that I shall be able to extenuate the offensiveness by relating the circumstances which gave birth to it.

"I unfortunately received letters from two friends, whose zeal for my service seems to have been greater than their intelligence was authentic, informing me that the same men who, by art and management, had brought about, in a thin house, the confirmation of the absurd and iniquitous sentence of the court-martial, were determined to pursue the matter still further, and, on the pretence of economy, to make a motion for the final removal of me from the army, as an encumbrance. It happened, at the very moment these letters came to my hands, I was very much indisposed; so much so, as not to be able to write myself; \* and, at the same time, my horses were at the door, to carry me down the country, where business called me. The bodily pain I was in, joined to the misinformation I received, ruffled my temper beyond all bounds; and the necessity of setting out immediately prevented me from giving myself time to consider the propriety or impropriety of what I was about. And thus these two circumstances, concurring, gave birth to the note which I dictated, which no man can more sincerely reprobate than I do myself, and for which I most sincerely beg pardon of Congress.

"But, Sir, I must entreat that, in the acknowledging of the impropriety and indecorum of my conduct in this affair, it may not be supposed that I mean to court a restoration to the rank I held; so far from it, that I do assure you, had not the incident fallen out, I should have requested Congress to accept my resignation, as, for obvious reasons, whilst the army is continued in its present circumstances, I could not serve with safety and dignity. My present acknowledgment, therefore, of the impropriety and indecorum of the measure I suffered myself to be hurried into, and my submission without a complaint to the subsequent decision of Congress, will, I hope, be attributed to the real motive, the conviction of having done wrong.

\* He was likewise disabled from writing by a wound in his hand.

"I shall now, Sir, conclude with sincerely wishing that Congress may find many servants ready to make as great sacrifices as I have made, and possessed with the same degree of zeal for their service as has from the beginning governed all my actions, but with the good fortune never, by one act of imprudence, to incur their displeasure; and I can, without arrogance, assert, on self-examination, that this is the only step in the whole line of my conduct which could justly furnish matter of offence to that honorable body.

"I am, Sir, &c.

"CHARLES LEE."

## CHAPTER XIV.

*Continues to reside at his Estate.—Engages in political Discussions.—Freedom of the Press.—Visits Baltimore and Philadelphia.—His Death.—Remarks on his Character, and on some of the Incidents of his Life.*

HAVING thus thrown off all connection with the army, he became more tranquil in mind, and entered with a considerable degree of interest into the discussion of public affairs and passing events, particularly such as occurred in Virginia. He had leisure to indulge his fondness for books. In one of his letters, he says he had just finished reading the whole of Warburton's "Divine Legation of Moses." At home, he continued to live in the same discomfort and seclusion as before; but he made occasional visits to his friends, in different parts of the state, with whom his former attachments, and his powers of interesting and instructive conversation, rendered him a welcome guest.\*

\*Among these friends were the family connections of Mr. Monroe, afterwards President of the United States, then a young man in his minority. He was forming schemes of travel, and he wrote to General Lee, asking his advice on that subject and some others. The reply is curious, as predicting the future success of his young friend, and touching a personal trait which always,

If we may judge from a hint in a letter written to him by Mr. Ralph Wormeley, junior, of Rosegill, dated March 2d, 1780, he at one time thought of embarking in the career of politics. Alluding to some former transaction, Mr. Wormeley says,

“If I expressed my sentiments of General Lee’s abilities and intentions, I could not express them in any terms less pregnant than I did; and I can faithfully assure you, that, had you represented Berkeley, I would have tried my interest in Middlesex. And, had I obtained a seat in the national assembly, I would have joined you hand and heart, by every effort of my abilities, every argument in my comprehension, to bring about freedom of debate and the liberty of the press, without which the representative deliberations generate only faction and fetters, and noisy professions of patriotism become air. But necessity, state necessity, is the scythe that mows down every argument; and you are not to be taught by me that, by the assistance of this argument, there is no degree of despotism which may not be vindicated and imposed.”

The freedom of the press and of debate was a topic upon which General Lee often descanted, with his usual earnestness. This freedom he maintained to be the vital element of civil and political liberty. The custom of Congress and the state legislatures to sit with closed doors, thus shielding the opinions and conduct of the members from the watchful oversight of their constituents, he looked upon as defrauding the people of some of their most valuable rights. As to the freedom of the press, he said it had “no more existence in this coun-

in some degree, adhered to him. The following is an extract. “The letter I received from you by Mr. White gave me the greatest pleasure, as it assures me of your love and affection. What he reports of you gives me still more, as it not only assures me of the certainty you have of well establishing yourself in fame and fortune, but the good figure you make flatters my vanity, as I have always asserted that you would appear one of the first characters of this country, if your shyness did not prevent the display of the knowledge and talents you possess. Mr. White tells me you have got rid of this *mauvaise honte*, and only retain a certain degree of recommendatory modesty. I rejoice in it with all my soul, as I really love and esteem you most sincerely and affectionately.”

try than at Rome or Constantinople." Not that it was chained by the laws, but by the heavier trammels of a perverted public opinion. Coming recently from a theatre where such writers as JUNIUS, and others of his stamp, could with impunity assail the public character and conduct of the highest men in the nation, he could not conceive that a republic, boasting of its new-born liberty, should consent to wear so degrading a badge of slavery as that of restraint upon the press. An unre-served discussion of the acts and opinions of public men was, in his view, the great bulwark of freedom, a barrier against the inroads of ambition, and an incentive to patriotism and the noblest virtues.

He raised his voice against some of the acts of the Virginia legislature. Among these were "the *tender law*, inverting the eternal rules of justice, corrupting the morals of the people, inciting and securing every kind of breach of faith and villany, and ruining the honest, the benevolent, and the generous; and next, the *confiscation law*, which strips indiscriminately of their property Whigs and Tories, friends and foes, women and orphans, for no crime, or even the color of any crime, unless eventual, unavoidable absence, from the necessity of their affairs, can be constituted a crime." He had good reason for denouncing the tender law, by which a depreciated currency could be forced on a creditor at its nominal value. He made a bargain for selling his estate, and received the first payment in sterling money. Before possession was given he ascertained that the remainder, much the larger part of the whole, was to be paid in a depreciated paper currency, under the operation of the tender law. He succeeded in releasing himself from the contract, and was enabled to refund the first payment by the timely aid of two of his friends, Robert Morris and William Goddard. This coincidence of personal interest with what he considered a vicious and inequitable legislation, was accidental. He was certainly as disinterested as any man ever could be in his steady and un-



compromising defence of the rights and liberties of the people.

An experiment of two or three years in the business of a practical farmer convinced him, that he was neither a skilful nor thrifty agriculturist. His farm was unprofitable, his agents unfaithful, and he resolved to change his mode of life. The plans he may have formed for the future are not known. He had held preliminary negotiations with several individuals for the sale of his estate, but none of them had been brought to maturity, when, early in the autumn of 1782, he made a visit to his friends in Baltimore. He remained in that city a few days, and then continued his journey to Philadelphia. Here he had scarcely established himself in lodgings at an inn, when he was seized with an ague, followed by a fever, which baffled the skill of the physicians, and terminated his life on the 2d of October, at the age of fifty-one. In the delirium caused by the fever, the last words he was heard to say were, "Stand by me, my brave grenadiers!"

Notwithstanding his late aberrations, the citizens of Philadelphia, and men high in office, had not forgotten his early services and generous zeal in the cause of their country, and all seemed impressed with the feeling that they demanded a grateful tear. Every mark of respect, which the occasion could require, was shown to his memory. He was buried with military honors. His remains were deposited in the cemetery of Christ Church, and were followed to the grave by a large concourse of citizens, the President of Congress and some of the members, the President and Council of Pennsylvania, the Minister Plenipotentiary of France, and several officers of distinction, belonging to both the American and French armies.

Thus ended the eventful career of General Charles Lee, a man who filled no ordinary space in the eye of the world, and whose misfortunes stand in melancholy contrast with his brilliant accomplishments, and the



admiration, which, for a time, he drew from the willing and grateful hearts of a whole country. The preceding narrative will have failed of its aim, if it has not enabled the reader to form a judgment sufficiently exact of his character and his conduct; yet a few words more may not be misapplied or superfluous.

In the first place we may say, that he should not be held accountable for the vehement passions and extremely excitable temper, which had been wrought by nature into the very constitution of his being. We may regret, and even condemn, his want of self-control; yet some indulgence is certainly due to the infirmities of such a mind. Few men have had the trial of so many conflicting elements in their nature, and for this reason few are competent to judge with perfect candor of the difficulties to be encountered in commanding and subduing them. At all events, it is neither reasonable nor just, that great qualities and high aspirations, steady in their action, should be darkened and thrown in the background by casual defects, transient in their operation, and seldom mischievous in their consequences.

There are innumerable proofs of the constancy of his friendships; and, if he was sometimes capricious, the evidence now left to us will not warrant the charge of insincerity as being a trait of his character. His hostility to Washington affords the most memorable instance of an unforgiving spirit. This root of bitterness he nourished in his bosom to the last; the hated idea haunted and tortured his imagination day and night; it was, with him, what he calls, on a different occasion, "the very madness of the moon;" and he suffered no opportunity to escape, either in writing or speaking, without pouring out the flood of his resentment and reproaches. It would be idle to devise an apology for exhibitions of temper so wild and extravagant; but it should be remembered, that he looked upon the conduct of Washington towards him at Monmouth, however it might be interpreted by others, as

the deep fountain of all his misfortunes. Wounded pride, disappointed hopes, a sinking reputation, blasted prospects, all the ills that brooded upon his soul, he referred to this source. In this conflict of heated passion and excited sensibility, he lost sight of his own indiscretions, and sought solace by pampering his imagination with vain dreams of persecution and wrongs, and in uttering maledictions against their author. But in this there was no disguise; he was the last man in the world to conceal his opinions, or mould them to suit the occasion; and it should be said to his credit, that he was totally incapable of attempting any design by underhand means, plot, cabal, or intrigue, so often the resort of little minds and reckless ambition.

With this prodigality of frankness on his part, it was impossible that Washington should not become well informed of his sentiments and his manner of divulging them. He allowed them to pass without notice. No letter written by him during the war has been found, touching the transactions of General Lee, except those heretofore referred to, which were drawn from him by published remarks on his conduct, of which General Lee was the avowed author. And, after the war, when an inquiry was made of him concerning the publication of General Lee's papers, he replied, with a dignity and calmness suited to his character,

"In answer to your letter, I can only say, that your own good judgment must direct you in the publication of the manuscript papers of General Lee. I can have no request to make concerning the work. I never had a difference with that gentleman but on public ground, and my conduct towards him on this occasion was such only, as I felt myself indispensably bound to adopt in discharge of the public trust reposed in me. If this produced in him unfavorable sentiments of me, I yet can never consider the conduct I pursued, with respect to him, either wrong or improper, however I may regret that it may have been differently viewed by him, and that it excited his censure and animadversions.

Should there appear in General Lee's writings anything injurious or unfriendly to me, the impartial and dispassionate world must decide how far I deserved it from the general tenor of my conduct." \*

In this extract everyone will perceive the tone and spirit, the moderation, candor, and elevation of mind, which he would expect from the character of Washington as it is now known to the world. At another time, after General Lee's death, he said of him, that "he possessed many great qualities." And, in whatever light the affair of Monmouth shall be viewed, it may with confidence be affirmed, that Washington took no steps of a personal nature, either directly or indirectly, except such as were necessarily connected with that single event, which could in any degree tend to injure the character of General Lee while living, or tarnish his memory after his earthly career was closed.

Men of distinguished character, both in the civil and military line, possessing the confidence of their country, continued to be his friends to the last, notwithstanding the shade that had been cast upon him by his misfortunes. Among these he enumerated, in a private letter, a few months before his death, Robert Morris, Richard Henry Lee, Samuel Adams, Generals Schuyler, Sullivan, Wayne, Greene, Knox, and several others. These were not men who would cherish a friendship for one, whom they looked upon as culpably delinquent in the exercise of a public trust, or as treacherous to the cause in which he had so ardently engaged. There is another evidence of this friendship in a high quarter, which claims insertion. General Lincoln, then at the head of the Department of War, received a letter on some public business from a gentleman in Winchester, Virginia, to whom he wrote in reply, June 8th, 1782, "It affords me real pleasure to find, that I am regarded by the citizens of Winchester as General Lee's friend. Do me

\* This letter was written, June 11th, 1785, to Mr. William Goddard, who had issued proposals for publishing the Writings of General Lee, in three volumes. The plan was never executed. The imperfect volume by Mr. Langworthy contains the only collection of the papers that has been published.

the justice to believe, that this opinion is perfectly corroborated by sentiments of esteem and affection, which I hope will always retain me such."

In his last will, he paid a tribute of affectionate remembrance to several of his intimate friends, and of grateful generosity to the humble dependents, who had adhered to him and ministered to his wants in his retirement. The bulk of his estate in Berkeley was given to four individuals, as a testimony of his gratitude for the obligations of kindness they had steadily conferred upon him through evil and good report. All his other property, in every part of the world, was bequeathed to his only sister, Sydney Lee, to whom he was ever devotedly attached.

Finally, in forming our general estimate of his character, after allowing all the weight they deserve to his weaknesses and faults, his errors and eccentricities, we must still acknowledge with Washington, that "he possessed many great qualities." From the first to the last, in his principles, writings, and acts, he proved himself an uncompromising champion for the rights and liberties of mankind. He adopted the American cause under a firm conviction of its justice; he threw into it the fervid energies of his whole soul, with a sincerity and heartiness which cannot be questioned. By the example of his enthusiasm, by his military talents and resolute spirit, and by his successful enterprise in the early part of the war, he rendered important services to the country in the time of her greatest need. While we lament and condemn the faults which obscured his brighter qualities, let us not withhold from them the mantle of charity; let us not forget, that during his life the effects of them were severely visited upon him in his blighted hopes and defeated aims, nor refuse to his memory the award of gratitude and respect, which the prominent part he acted in the great struggle for American independence may rightfully claim.

V.



THE

TREASON OF CHARLES LEE.

“If I had ever assumed the character of a military genius, and the officer of experience ; if, under these false colors, I had solicited the command I was honored with ; or if, after my appointment, I had driven on, under the sole guidance of my own judgment, and self-will ; and misfortunes, the result of obstinacy and misconduct, not of necessity, had followed, I should have thought myself a proper subject for the lash, not only of his, but of the pen of every other writer, and a fit object of public resentment. . . . An effrontery, which few men do, and, for the honor of human nature, none ought to possess.”

WASHINGTON TO PRESIDENT REED, *July 29th, 1779.*

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. . . . . “Servetur ad imum,  
Qualis ab incepto processerit, et sibi constet.”

HORACE, *Ad Pisones* : 126.

“Mr. Lee’s Plan—March 29, 1777.”

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THE

# TREASON OF CHARLES LEE

MAJOR GENERAL

SECOND IN COMMAND IN THE AMERICAN ARMY  
OF THE REVOLUTION

BY

GEORGE H. MOORE

LIBRARIAN OF THE NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

[READ BEFORE THE SOCIETY, ON TUESDAY EVENING, JUNE 22, 1853.]

*“The evil that men do lives after them.”*

NEW-YORK:

CHARLES SCRIBNER, 124 GRAND STREET.

M.DCCC.LX.





TO THE  
HON. LUTHER BRADISH, LL.D.  
PRESIDENT OF THE NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
WITH A GRATEFUL  
ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THAT PERSONAL FRIENDSHIP  
WHICH HAS BEEN  
THE ENCOURAGEMENT AND REWARD OF MY  
LONG SERVICE IN THE SOCIETY  
OVER WHICH  
HE PRESIDES WITH EQUAL DIGNITY AND ABILITY  
THIS ESSAY  
IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED  
BY  
GEORGE HENRY MOORE.

*January, 1860.*



## PREFACE.

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THIS Essay, which presents to the world, for the first time, the positive proofs of the treason of General Lee, is intended simply to indicate their relation to the history of the American Revolution. They seem to me too important to be withheld during the time necessary for the preparation of the work, of which my announcement accompanies this volume—and for which I am led to expect from various private sources in England, as well as this country, additional materials of great importance.

I have given fac-similes of the original Plan of Treason, and, for the purpose of comparison, of the letter to General Gates, written by General Lee, just before his capture. The first is the document which suggested this essay. Its authenticity is unquestionable, and will bear the most thorough investigation. When it was first brought to me, with other documents from the same sources in England, I was not allowed to examine it any further than was necessary to satisfy myself of its genuineness by those tests with which all scholars are familiar—a restriction to which I submitted upon the undoubted assurance that the same conditions had been and would be imposed upon every one to whom it had been or would be shown. As this restriction was intended to assure the pecuniary value of the manuscripts, which were offered for sale, I have no reason to doubt that it was invariably imposed, so that when I purchased them, a few days afterwards, I found myself in sole possession of papers of the most startling character

—a key to some of the strangest secrets of the Revolution.

The portrait opposite the title-page is reduced from the folio print published in London during the war, and was engraved to accompany the illustrated edition of Irving's *Life of Washington*. I am indebted to the liberal courtesy of Mr. George P. Putnam for permission to use the plate.

The other engraving was taken from a caricature drawing, by Barham Rushbrooke, Esq., of West Stowe, near Bury, in England. He was commonly called *Counsellor Rushbrooke*, from his having been bred to the law. He was considered as a man of great taste in painting, and all the liberal arts. His grandson married one of the daughters of Sir Charles Davers, who was one of General Lee's most intimate friends.

General Lee's likeness was taken on his return from Poland, in his uniform as aid-de-camp to Stanislaus, King of Poland. It appears to have been carefully preserved by the Davers family, and was engraved in 1813, to accompany a work published by Dr. Thomas Girdlestone, to prove that Lee was the author of *Junius*. That gentleman, to whose work I am indebted for these facts, says of it: "*Though designed as a caricature, it was allowed, by all who knew General Lee, to be the only successful delineation either of his countenance or person.*" It is the only one of the so-called portraits, which I have met with, bearing any evidence of authenticity, or answering to the personal descriptions given by his contemporary friends and biographers. Sir Henry Bunbury says: "In person he was tall and extremely thin; his face ugly, with an aquiline nose of enormous proportion." Dr. Girdlestone says: "General Lee was a remarkably thin man, and is said to have had the smallest hand and slenderest fingers that could be seen." Mr. Langworthy says: "The General, in his person, was of a genteel make, and rather above the middle size; his remarkable aquiline nose rendered his face somewhat disagreeable." Another description is

that "he was of more than ordinary stature, lean but well proportioned. His features were disagreeable."

The Life of General Lee has been written by Mr. Edward Langworthy, in the memoirs published in 1792 and 1797 in England, and thrice reprinted in America; by Sir Henry Bunbury, whose father was a first cousin of Lee, in 1838; and by Mr. Sparks in 1846, for his series of American Biographies. To these are to be added numerous anonymous sketches, scattered through the journals and periodicals of the last century, and notices more or less brief, in various biographical works. I have sought for and examined all that are accessible to me. To all I wish to render due acknowledgment, and especially to MR. SPARKS, whose steps must be followed with grateful reverence by every student of American History, and with no little caution by any who may presume, even in the light of new discoveries, to differ with him on any important point.

MR. BANCROFT, to whom I made known the earliest results of my studies, recognizing at once the important bearing which they have on the subject of his own grand work, permitted me to make several extracts from his collection of MSS., illustrating and confirming the positions which I had taken; and encouraged me in my labors by his liberal approbation.

I have also to acknowledge my obligations to Professor George W. Greene, Mr. John Jay, Mr. John Carter Brown, of Providence, to whose liberality and the kindness of my friend the Hon. John Russell Bartlett, I am indebted for access to the treasures in his library, one of the richest in the world in American History; Mr. N. F. Cabell, of Warminster, Nelson County, Va.; Mr. William Hunter, of the State Department at Washington; Mr. Townsend Ward, and Mr. Ferdinand J. Dreer, of Philadelphia.

But my chiefest acknowledgment is really due and most heartily rendered to PETER FORCE, my father's and my own venerated friend, whose great work, the American Archives, is the monument of his ability,

judgment, industry, and fidelity. It is the *thesaurus maximus*, the chief treasure-house of American History. Its completeness, and richness of illustration, for the period it embraces, is such as to enhance the regret, which is shared by all scholars, that its progress has been so long and so seriously interrupted.

NOTE.—The fac-similes and engravings mentioned in the foregoing preface are omitted in the present reprint.



## THE TREASON OF CHARLES LEE.

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MR. PRESIDENT :

THE paper which I have the honor to submit to the Society this evening, is sketched from materials reserved for a more elaborate examination of the principal topic, than the limits of a single paper would permit. I have availed myself of the invitation, to make known to the public the existence of documents hitherto unknown in our history, and of great importance to that portion of it, which records the struggles through which the Republic came into existence. In the hour to which I am limited, I shall ask your attention to some sketches of the life and character of Charles Lee, in order to a proper appreciation of his place in the history of the American Revolution.

CHARLES LEE was the youngest son of Colonel John Lee, of Dernhall, in Cheshire, England; his mother was Isabella, the second daughter of Sir Henry Bunbury, Bart., of Stanney, in the same county. The Lees of Dernhall were an ancient family, of which the Earls of Lichfield were a younger branch; but the chief line which removed from Lee to Dernhall in the time of Charles I., became extinct in the male line at the decease of the subject of this paper. John Lee, some time a Captain of Dragoons, afterwards Lieutenant-Colonel of General Barrell's Regiment, 4th Foot Guards, was made Colonel of the 44th, (or East Essex Regiment,) a Regiment on the Irish Establishment, March 11, 1743. He continued in the service until his death, which occurred on the 5th August, 1750. His

widow (baptized at Chester Cathedral, October 2, 1702) was still living in December, 1764. Of their four children, the daughter, Sidney Lee, and the youngest son, Charles, were at that time the only survivors; Thomas and Henry having died, and without leaving children. Miss Sidney Lee survived all her brothers, and died unmarried, 16th January, 1788. Madame D'Arblay, who met her at Bath, speaks of her, as "a very agreeable woman." She was an accomplished and liberal woman, and treated the Americans, who were captured and imprisoned by the British in England, with great humanity. The principal part of the estate which General Lee possessed at the time of his death, he bequeathed to her, and she remitted four thousand five hundred pounds sterling to America, in order to discharge her brother's debts, lest his legatees in this country should be deprived of what he had bequeathed to them.

CHARLES LEE was born in 1731, and is said to have received a commission in the army at eleven years of age. The army was not at that time, with respect to the appointment and promotion of subalterns, under the wise regulations which afterwards prevailed: not only privates, but officers were on the Army List, whom their own Colonels knew only to exist because their names were on the roll; and instances are said to have been known, in which one-third of the subalterns of a regiment were in the nursery!

The Duchess of Marlborough, in one of her letters to the Earl of Stair, December 3, 1737, has preserved a curious instance of this abuse. She says that "Lord Hervey's wife's father, Mr. Lepel, made her a cornet in his regiment as soon as she was born, which is no more wrong to the design of an army than if she had been a son: and she was paid many years after she was a maid of honour. . . . My Lord Sunderland got her a pension of the late King, [George I.,] it being too ridiculous to continue her any longer an officer in the army." When such things were tolerated within the

purlieus of the Court, it would be strange if the Irish establishment were not full of similar examples. Ireland was always the theatre of the most flagrant abuses. Besides, in those days, and indeed many years later, it was one of the usual courses of military education, to remove a boy immediately from the preparatory school into the regiment, and to give him no other training than what the regiment, with perhaps the occasional tuition of a friendly superior, might afford—the main business being to learn the practical art and exercise of war.

There is no improbability, therefore, that his father, soon after he received his own commission as Colonel, may have placed young Lee in the regiment, and before he had completed his twelfth year.

He is said to have considered himself as born in the army; and it is natural to suppose that his education was designed with reference to that profession to which his own temper, not less than the inclination of his parents, must have directed him. Little is known, however, of his early training. The free grammar school of Bury St. Edmund's, and an academy in Switzerland, share its honors with the regiment.

It is stated, that to respectable attainments in the Greek and Latin classics, he afterwards added a thorough familiarity with the French, and a competent skill in the Spanish, German, and Italian languages. The latter he may have acquired in the course of those long wanderings in search of knowledge or pleasure, to which his restless disposition urged him—for nature had made him an enthusiast, and whatever was the object of his pursuit, he followed it with an extreme ardor. Possessing talents above the common order, he turned his advantages (such as they were) to good account; although the practical lesson of his life seems clearly to indicate little strictness and method, in that domestic discipline which would have been far more valuable to him than any of his acquisitions.

The study of his profession enlisted all his energy.

As he approached and entered upon its active duties, he applied himself with characteristic zeal, and his writings, not less than his career, leave us in no doubt that he acquired a very general, if not thorough knowledge of what was then known in England as the science of war.

On the 2d May, 1751, a few months after his father's death, he received a Lieutenant's commission in the same regiment, which was continued on the Irish establishment after it was ordered to America in 1754.

Hitherto his opportunities of becoming familiar with the school of the soldier, must have been very insufficient. The English service, (especially on garrison duty in Ireland,) in times of peace, afforded him no practical lessons; for mounting guard once or twice a week, or the preparation for the review of a single regiment, could hardly be esteemed as such: and it was long after the time of which I am speaking, that the Duke of Wellington—who acquired his own military education on the Continent—is reported to have said that if ten thousand men were placed in Hyde Park, there was not an officer in the service who could get them out!

But a better field of practice was now opening before Lee. His active military career began, as it ended, in America; and his first experience in arms presents singular points of resemblance as well as contrast with his last service in the field. In fact, nearly all the real service he ever saw was in America. It began in the valley of the Monongahela, and it closed on the Heights of Monmouth. Washington saw the beginning and the end, and the same eyes that had anxiously watched as he followed and protected the flight of the young subaltern in 1755, flashed withering scorn and indignation upon the traitor-general who meditated his disgrace in 1778.

When Braddock was sent out to repel the encroachments of France, and restore the English power upon the American Continent, the regiment in which Lee

was still a Lieutenant, was one of the "two European Regiments," which were the stamina of the expedition. The events which followed are too familiar to need any recital here, terminating as they did in "a scene of carnage which has been truly described as unexampled in the annals of modern warfare." It was, in truth, "the most extraordinary victory ever obtained, and the farthest flight ever made," and, as Mr. Irving has justly remarked, "struck a fatal blow to the deference for British prowess, which once amounted almost to bigotry, throughout the provinces." Franklin says in his autobiography, "This whole transaction gave us Americans the first suspicion, that our exalted ideas of the prowess of British regular troops had not been well founded."

In that ignominious and terrible defeat, Lee had the good fortune to escape without notice. I am not aware that the fact of his being present has been stated by any of his biographers, or the historians who have portrayed those tragic scenes with such graphic power. But I am able to say, as the result of a very careful and laborious examination of all the materials at hand for a decision, that he was on duty with his regiment at that time. Few of the officers escaped unhurt, and the number of those who came out with untarnished reputations was still less. Lee himself afterwards found occasion to allude to the fact that "none of the regulars chose to remember their early defeats and disgraces, particularly those upon the Ohio, in all which the provincials never led the flight, but were the last to leave the field;" and he does not seem to have broken through that prudent reserve in his own behalf. The silence of his biographers, especially of his kinsman, Sir Henry Bunbury, is very remarkable, but would be much more so, if the most diligent search had been rewarded with the discovery of anything honorable or even creditable to their hero.

The shattered remains of Braddock's broken army under Colonel Dunbar, reached Philadelphia early in

September. On the first of October, they marched for New York, and on the 8th and 9th, they passed the metropolis in thirty-three transport sloops from Amboy, on their way to winter quarters at Albany and Schenectady.

Lieutenant Lee was present at Fort Johnson, in some of the conferences between Sir William Johnson and the Indians of the Six Nations with their allies and dependants, which took place during the winter of 1755-'56. Upon these occasions and subsequently, when stationed in that part of the country, he had much intercourse with the Mohawks, and was captivated by their manners; their "hospitable, civil, and friendly" deportment, the personal beauty of many of them, their graceful carriage, and by what he calls their good breeding, or "constant desire to do everything that will please you, and strict carefulness not to say or do any thing that may offend you."

His admiration was reciprocated, and he was received with great favor, by adoption, into the tribe of the Bear. With curious felicity, they bestowed on him the name of Ounewaterika, which, in the Indian dialect, is said to signify "boiling water," or "the spirit that never sleeps."

He soon after purchased a company in his regiment, for which he paid nine hundred pounds. His commission as a captain in the 44th Regiment was dated 11th June, 1756.

Great preparations had been made for the campaign of that year, but the time wore quietly away. The only considerable movement of the 44th Regiment was in a tardy and abortive attempt to reinforce the garrison at Oswego, which surrendered to the French, 14th August, 1756. The loss of this important post excited a general alarm throughout the colonies; and the speaker of the New York Assembly, writing to the agent of that province, on the 13th of October, added to a gloomy picture of the state of affairs: "As for our forces on the northern frontier, both regulars and pro-



vincials, I expect to hear of no action by them, unless the enemy force them to it."

In the disposition of the forces for the ensuing winter (1756-'57), the 44th and 48th regiments were to garrison the forts between Albany and Crown Point.

In 1757, these regiments formed a part of the forces designed for the conquest of Louisbourg, the Dunkirk of America, which had, in the previous war, been captured from the French, chiefly through the zeal and enterprise of New England; even then arousing at home those jealous fears which had long predicted the independence of the colonies. Its restitution was, in reality, the purchase of a general peace in Europe by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, which restored this conquest to France; and it was now the object of the ministry to recover it. A vast armament was assembled at Halifax, under the command of Earl Loudoun, arousing the most sanguine expectations of success; but nothing was done to realize them. The campaign ended like the previous one, and the commander-in-chief was censured by his whole army. Among other employments of the idle time at Halifax, the troops had been engaged in making a garden to furnish vegetables as a precaution against the scurvy, and as a provision for the sick and wounded, who might be sent thither for their recovery, in case the intended attack against Louisbourg should take place. This provident foresight was a topic of merciless ridicule, and gave point to the satire of Lee which first brought him to notice in cotemporary history.

Smith, the historian of New York, recording the events of the winter of 1757-'58, says: "While we were in suspense respecting the plan expected for the operations of the ensuing year, the military officers indulged great heats concerning the inactivity of the last campaign. Lord Charles Hay led a party at Halifax in severe reflections on the Earl of Loudoun. Their animosities spread to New York; and among the discontented, no man indulged in greater liberties than



Mr. Lee, then a subaltern, who did not restrain himself in the open coffee-house from calling it the Cabbage Planting Expedition; drawing into question not only the Earl's military skill, but his courage and integrity."

It is worth noticing here, that the earliest published letter written by Lee, of which I have any knowledge, fully justifies the statements (with which it was furnished to the publisher by his relative, Sir Charles Bunbury), that he "began very early to abuse his superiors, and was not very nice in the terms he made use of;" and that he had "a turn for satire and a levelling disposition." He retained this character to the end of his career; and no officer, under whose immediate command he ever served, escaped his censure.

The second notice of Lee, by a younger cotemporary, presents his actions in no very favorable light, but can hardly be omitted.

In the latter part of June, 1758, his regiment proceeded to the north, in the army under General Abercrombie. As the troops were marched in detachments past the "Flats," above Albany, the ancient rural home of the Schuylers, each detachment was quartered for a night on the common, or in the offices. One of the first of these was commanded by Lee, afterwards of "frantic celebrity." He had neglected to bring the customary warrants for impressing horses and oxen, and procuring a supply of various necessaries, to be paid for by the agents of government on showing the usual documents; nevertheless he seized everything he wanted, where he could most readily find it; as if he were in a conquered country: and not content with this violence, poured forth a volley of execrations on all who presumed to question his right of appropriating for his troops, everything that could be serviceable to them; even Madame Schuyler, accustomed to universal respect, and to be considered as the friend and benefactress of the army, was not spared; and the aids which she never failed to bestow on those whom she saw about to expose their lives for the general defence, were rudely de-

manded or violently seized. Lee marched on after having done all the mischief in his power, followed the next day by an officer and gentleman of a very different character, the lamented Lord Howe.

At the assault of Ticonderoga, Lee is said to have distinguished himself, and received a severe wound from a musket shot, which passed through his body and broke two of his ribs. He was conveyed, with other wounded officers, to Albany, and this brings the sequel of his acquaintance with the Schuylers. "Madame Schuyler had fitted up a temporary hospital on hearing the news of the defeat. Among the patients was Lee, the same insolent and rapacious Lee, who had insulted this general benefactress, and deprived her of one of her greatest pleasures, that of giving a share of every thing she had, to advance the service. She treated him with compassion, without adverting by the least hint, to the past. . . . Even Lee felt and acknowledged the resistless force of such generous humanity. He swore, in his vehement manner, that he was sure there would be a place reserved for Madame in heaven, though no other woman should be there; and that he should wish for nothing better than to share her final destiny."

He remained at Albany until he recovered, when he joined his regiment in winter quarters at Newtown, Long Island; where, during the winter, he narrowly escaped assassination at the hands of a "little cowardly surgeon," as he called him, whom he had severely whipped for an alleged libel. I suppose his assailant to have been the surgeon of his own regiment.

During the next campaign, he accompanied the successful expedition against the French garrison at Niagara, which cut off the communication between Canada and Louisiana, and gave the English entire control of the upper lakes. He was subsequently despatched with a small party (another officer and fourteen men) to follow the route of the French who had escaped; the first party of English troops that ever crossed Lake

Erie. He went to Presq' Isle, and by way of Venango, down the western branch of the Ohio to Fort Duquesne. From this place, at that time in possession of the English, he made a march of seven hundred miles, to join General Amherst at Crown Point; another march to Oswego, and afterwards went to Philadelphia, where he remained through the winter, on the recruiting service.

In the campaign of 1760, which completed the British conquest of Canada, his regiment was with the forces led by Amherst from Lake Ontario down the St. Lawrence to Montreal; and soon after the reduction of Montreal, he returned to England. His friends there had encouraged him to return, with strong expectations of promotion, and the opportunity of service on the continent.

His uncle, Sir William Bunbury, writing from London, November 28th, 1759, said: "But sure you are not to stay on that continent for ever; we wish you to come again amongst your friends, and probably some change might be procured, as well as advance on this side of the water, if you desired it. Lord Granby commands in Germany at present, and is likely to be at the head of the army on this side of the water too, if Ligonier drops; and it is supposed he cannot last a great while longer. The taking of Munster, which we had advice of the other day, will be of great importance to our allied army, and secure them good winter quarters. A great many matches are talked of here in town, so that if you do not come soon, all our fine young ladies will be disposed of." His promotion soon followed: but it does not appear that Lee was permitted to enjoy either the winter quarters provided at Munster, or the felicity suggested in the society of any of "the fine young ladies."

Of his early services in America, it is not too much to say, that his success was such as to justify his choice of a profession, and satisfy the expectations of his friends. But even at this period his hot and imperious

temper was provoking serious difficulties, which a very little prudence would have avoided. His love of power, and his thirst of ambition, ill suited with the subordinate offices of a subaltern. He was born not only to command, but like Cæsar, not to brook contradiction from an equal, much less to receive commands from a superior. His restless disposition made even the service to him, a field for opposition; in every commanding officer he saw an usurper or a tyrant, and he hated no enemies more cordially than order and obedience. These reflections are forced upon us even in the scanty details of his early history, and give us one clue to that knowledge of his character which is necessary to enable us to account for the actions of his life.

On the 10th of August, 1761, he was promoted to a majority in the 103d regiment of foot, or the Volunteer Hunters. This regiment was disbanded in 1763, and Lee continued a major on half-pay until the 25th of May, 1772, when he was made a Lieutenant-Colonel, still on half-pay.

This was the highest rank he ever attained in the British service. And when, in 1769, he received the appointment of Major-General, from the King of Poland, he did not consider it incompatible with his higher rank, to retain his majority and receive the half-pay annexed to it, doubtless because it was "too considerable a sum to throw wantonly away."

In 1762, when the English auxiliary force was sent to assist Portugal in repelling the invasion of the Spaniards, Lee accompanied Brigadier-General Burgoyne, with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in the service of the King of Portugal. The combined armies were put under the command of the Count de la Lippe Buckbourg, an active and intelligent German officer, who had commanded the artillery of the British army in Westphalia, a man undoubtedly among the first of his time in military fame. He was placed at the head of about six thousand British troops, and a Portuguese army, the greater part of which was little better than

nominal, to defend an extensive frontier against the whole force of Spain, and a large body of the veteran troops of France. Burgoyne was intrusted with the defence of the most important pass upon the Tagus. The result of the campaign was to check the progress of the Spaniards, who retired within their own borders. Lee acquitted himself honorably, and in one affair especially, gained high praise. The command of a detachment destined to surprise the Spanish camp near the old Moorish Castle of Villa Velha on the south bank of the Tagus, was confided to him, and the service was performed in the most brilliant manner. He crossed the Tagus in the darkness of night; gained the rear of the Spaniards without discovery, and entered their quarters without being perceived, till his own bayonets told the secret. They were routed at once, with terrible slaughter; and having destroyed their magazines, and spiked or taken their guns, Lee and his men returned to the other side of the Tagus, loaded with booty and surrounded by helpless prisoners. This spirited achievement took place on the 6th of October, 1762. Lord Loudoun described it to the ministry as "a very gallant action," and the Count de la Lippe said, in a letter to the Earl of Egremont—applauding the conduct of "the gallant Lieutenant-Colonel Lee" and the British troops—"so brilliant a stroke speaks for itself." Thus recommended to the special favor of government by the Court of Lisbon and the Count de la Lippe, Lee returned to England.

But here his promotion in the British army halted. Notwithstanding the "brilliant prospects" which his intimacy with "men of high rank and influence in London," and the apparent "friendship of one of the cabinet ministers," seemed to promise, he still continued, and for many years afterwards, a Major on half-pay. His biographers have attributed his want of success to the part which he took in the discussion of some of the ministerial plans relating to American affairs, and date the beginning of his services to America from

this period. I doubt the correctness of this view of the case, for I have found no sufficient evidence to sustain it; and "it can scarcely be denied that he had a higher opinion of his claims than his services, and his just pretensions on this ground alone would naturally warrant."

His unpopularity may be said to have grown out of the severity of his strictures upon persons in authority, in the exercise of his illiberal freedom of speech, rather than his liberal sentiments. The enmities which he drew upon himself from certain powerful quarters (to which he afterwards referred in his letter to the King of Poland) were the fruit of that furious temper, which might have been expected to do great injury to any cause in which he engaged, and to none more than that in which he was most interested—his own advancement. Always forward, arrogant, and mutinous, strong in his own opinion, with the government he served he took all the liberties of an insolent servant who believes himself to be necessary; compelling them, even if they could not deny his talent, to judge him ill qualified by such a character to govern those under him, or to obey those above him. Eager, fickle, and violent in spirit, his instability and lack of judgment, together with his wanton and unhappy wit, made him quite as formidable to his friends as to his enemies.

Failing to obtain that recognition of his claims which he sought and expected, and seeing "no chance of being provided for at home," he determined to go into the Polish service, to which he had such recommendations that he thought he could not fail. The idea that he was actuated by any other motives than the desire to provide for himself and to see service, is simply absurd. He embarked in this cause as a soldier of fortune, and "without any definite purpose as to the side he should take. Action, the glory of arms, high rank in his profession, were the images that floated in his imagination and directed his course." This was at the time when the dissensions in Poland



had arisen to such a height, as to make it probable that a struggle for her ancient independence was to be undertaken by that unhappy nation.

In Poland, he received an appointment as aid-de-camp to the king; who, Lee states, "had it not in his power to provide for me in the army." This appointment was one of honor, rather than employment; and Lee, weary of inactivity, readily accepted an invitation to accompany the king's ambassador to Constantinople. This expedition came near proving fatal to him, for he narrowly escaped starvation and freezing on the summits of the mountains of Bulgaria. He reached Constantinople, however, where he remained about four months, escaping there also from the ruins of his dwelling, which was destroyed by an earthquake.

In December, 1766, he was again in England, renewing his attempts to obtain promotion in the British army. He presented to the king, with his own hands, an urgent letter of recommendation from Poniatowski, Stanislaus Augustus, the last King of Poland; reminding him, at the same time, of the promise he had made in his favor to Lord Thanet three years before. All was in vain; his attendance at court produced nothing but disappointment, and he abandoned his pursuit of promotion in the English service, with a bitter resentment against king and court, which rankled ever afterwards in his breast. In 1768-'9, he hurried again to Poland, designing to engage in the service of the Russians against the Turks. The King of Poland in the summer of 1769, made him a Major-General. He is said to have "served through one campaign." He was with the Russian army a few days on the Turkish frontier, and in this so-called service, as in that of England, his opinions of the skill and genius of the generals in command were exceedingly scornful and contemptuous. He left the army and crossed the Carpathian Mountains, on his route to try the waters of Buda. In Hungary, he was attacked with a fever which threatened his life. He recovered, however, and went to Vienna,



where he passed the winter of 1769-'70. He suffered much from bad health during these years of wandering, especially with rheumatism and gout, which were his very frequent companions. He passed the summer of 1770 in Italy, where he became involved in a duel with a foreign officer, whom he killed, though he was wounded himself, losing two of his fingers in the affair. His first biographer remarks that "his warmth of temper drew him into many rencounters of this kind: in all which he acquitted himself with singular courage, sprightliness of imagination, and great presence of mind."

It is difficult to follow him in his roving over Europe at this period, which have been compared in speed and irregularity to a meteor; but there is one point, which can hardly be passed over without remark—the claim made for him as the author of the *Letters of Junius*. His vanity led him to acknowledge them as his own in 1773, but the evidence on the subject is conclusive that he could not have been the author of those letters.

In the summer of 1773, he quitted England forever. Disappointed in his hopes of advancement by the administration, which he hated, and lampooned publicly and privately, his sympathies had fallen naturally into that opposition, which, though "feeble and fluctuating in numbers," "uttered the language of the British constitution, and the sentiment of the British people, when it spoke for freedom."

He had already fixed his hopes on America, and in his schemes and visions of the future, had identified his own prospects to some extent with her chances of emerging from ministerial oppression. Some private interests, too, called him here. But America, though the chief, was not the only country, which presented to his troubled spirit the view of a climate and soil more friendly to the spirit of liberty than the land of his nativity. In his own language, while she was "stretching forth her capacious arms, Switzerland, and some of the Italian States had room also" to admit the "gener-

ous few " among whom he ranked himself. His enthusiasm fluctuated with his anger and disappointment; and candor will seek in vain to find in the fretful waves and noisy torrents of his passion, that strong and constant under-current of patriotic principle, which flows steadily on to the end of its course. Certainly his patriotism was not free from the taint of disappointed ambition; its loudest tones followed his unsuccessful attempts to obtain promotion, and were accompanied with the most virulent abuse of the king and court.

He arrived at New York, in the ship *London*, Captain James Chambers, after a passage of eight weeks, on Friday night, 8th October, 1773. He remained in New York, suffering from an attack of gout for a part of the time, until the 29th of November, when he is noticed in the following terms, in *Rivington's Gazette*, as having "set out for the Southern Colonies—a native of Great Britain, and Major-General in the service of his Polish Majesty—a sincere friend to liberty in general, and an able advocate for the freedom and rights of the Colonies in particular."

He soon ran through the colonies of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, attracting in all quarters marked attention, and assiduously cultivating the acquaintance of all the prominent men among the Whigs. He then returned to visit the Eastern Colonies, in the summer of 1774.

To his old friend and fellow-soldier Gates, afterwards "the hero of Saratoga," he wrote from "Williamsburg, May ye 6th" [1774], on his way northward—"My plan is at present for Boston, and in the autumn to fall down the Ohio to the Mississippi, if we are not prevented by a war, which I think probable enough. What think you of our blessed ministry? Do they not improve in absurdity and wickedness? Seriously, Gates, I think it incumbent on every man of liberality, or even common honesty, to contribute his mite to the cause of mankind and of liberty, which is now attacked

in her last and only asylum. She is drove from the other Hemisphere; for in England she has been for some time only a name; for my own part, I am determined (at least I think I am) not to be slack in whatever mode my service is required."

The enthusiasm which he found pervading the Colonies, would have fired the zeal of a much less excitable man than Lee. It was the inspiration of the best passages of his career. He saw the earnest determination of the colonists to sacrifice all for freedom, and recognized that justice in their cause, which made their firmness virtue.

In 1774, he wrote the *Strictures on a Friendly Address to all Reasonable Americans*, in reply to Dr. Myles Cooper, one of the best of his writings, which was reprinted many times, and widely circulated. At this time, his pen and tongue were constantly active in the cause of the Colonies, which he supported with great ardor. His services in this way were undoubtedly important—probably much more so than any others of his life.

He returned to Philadelphia and was present at the first session of the Continental Congress; in constant and familiar intercourse with the delegates from all sections of the country. He again visited Virginia and Maryland, and, in the latter colony, was present at their convention to deliberate on public affairs.

In a letter to his friend, Sir Charles Davers, written from Philadelphia, September 28th, 1774, he says: "I have now lately run through the colonies from Virginia to Boston, and can assure you, by all that is solemn and sacred, that there is not a man on the whole continent (placemen and some high churchmen excepted), who is not determined to sacrifice his property, his life, his wife, family, children, in the cause of Boston, which he justly considers as his own. Inclosed, I send you the resolutions of one of their counties, which the delegates of all America are sworn to abide by. They are in earnest, and will abide by them so strictly that I am

persuaded that the parent country must shake from the foundation. . . . They certainly are to be justified by every law, human and divine. You will ask, where will they find generals? But I ask, What generals have their tyrants? In fact, the match in this respect will be pretty equal."

It required no prophet to see, in the immediate future of America, the necessity of providing for military defence, the organization of a Continental Army, and the appointment of general officers to exercise the command under the authority of the Continental Congress. In this crisis, Lee "assumed the character of a military genius, and the officer of experience," and "under these false colors solicited the command." He had been in the British army thirty-two years—eight years an Ensign, five years a Lieutenant, five years a Captain, eleven years a Major, and three years a Lieutenant-Colonel; the last twelve years on half-pay. In all this, he had never obtained the command of a regiment!

In America, he seems to have invaded men's good opinions with singular audacity and success, and obtained for himself from the start a degree of popularity and confidence almost without parallel. Certainly, at that time, every thing which he claimed for himself was fully and freely accorded; and there is no reason to doubt that he expected he should soon become the first in military rank on this continent. In 1775, he purchased an estate in Berkeley county, Virginia, near that of his friend Gates; thus apparently uniting with the people of America, and identifying himself with their cause and feelings. This step removed what he considered the most serious obstacle in his way to the chief command, as he himself had written to Edmund Burke, from Annapolis, December 16th, 1774: "Nor do I think the Americans would or ought to confide in a man, let his qualifications be ever so great, who has no property among them." The preliminaries to the purchase were not completed in the latter part of May, 1775, when, to a brief note to a friend concerning them, he added,

"it would be foolish to write to day—the Congress will settle all by Tuesday, then a letter may be worth receiving." The second Continental Congress had met at Philadelphia on the 10th of May, 1775, and Lee was present anxiously awaiting their action.

Upon the organization of the Continental Army, Lee was appointed second Major-General; Washington being made Commander-in-chief, and General Ward, who was then in command of the New England Army near Boston, first Major-General.

A cotemporary writer in Maryland says: "The exaltation of [Washington] to the supreme command is considered as a severe stroke to the ambition of General Lee, who, relying on a supposed opinion of his superior abilities and experience, expected to have been unanimously chosen to this elevated station. I am persuaded, that General Washington would rejoice in an opportunity of returning into the private walks of life; but it is too evident that General Lee is governed by a vindictive spirit, the result of disappointment in military advancement, while in the service of Great Britain. Perhaps this additional mortification may moderate his zeal in the cause he has recently espoused." The unanimity with which the nomination of Washington was confirmed, checked every expression of discontent, although Lee was not the only candidate for the honor. John Adams records some very curious manifestations of feeling on this subject, but none so grateful to the historian as the characteristic dignity and modesty of Washington. A high estimate was placed upon the experience and abilities of Lee. Elbridge Gerry, writing from Massachusetts to the representatives of that colony on the 4th of June, 1775, says: "We want a regular general to assist us in disciplining the army . . . and, although the pride of our people would prevent their submitting to be led by any general not an American, yet I cannot but think that General Lee might be so established as to render great service by his presence and councils with our officers." In these opinions, he

was seconded by General James Warren. Lee succeeded in concealing his disappointment, and even acquiesced, though with a very bad grace, in being placed below General Ward, whom he describes as "a fat old gentleman, who had been a popular church-warden, but had no acquaintance whatever with military affairs." He had been nominated as second officer, and strenuously urged by many, particularly Mr. Mifflin, who said that "General Lee would serve cheerfully under Washington; but, considering his rank, character, and experience, could not be expected to serve under any other; that Lee must be *aut secundus aut nullus*." But this undoubtedly authorized statement of his claims and expectations was unavailing. John Adams, "though he had as high an opinion of General Lee's learning, general information, and especially of his science and experience in war," frankly said that he "could not advise General Ward to humiliate himself and his country so far as to serve under him."

Adams also bears witness to "the earnest desire of General Washington to have the assistance of Lee and Gates, the extreme attachment of many of our best friends in the southern colonies to them, the reputation they would give our arms in Europe, and especially with the ministerial generals and army in Boston, as well as the real American merit of them both;" all which overcame his anxiety for the natural prejudices and virtuous attachment of his countrymen to their own officers and secured his vote. Samuel Adams spoke of Washington, Lee, and Major Mifflin, as "a triumvirate which will please the circle of our friends."

Washington himself, who placed the most modest estimate upon his own abilities and military experience, and could declare with the utmost sincerity that he did not think himself equal to the command he was honored with—an honor he neither sought after nor desired—magnanimously acknowledged Lee's claim to the first place in military knowledge and experience.

An acknowledgment far too generous! It was not



his due, nor can it fail hereafter to be regarded as a remarkable phenomenon in our revolutionary history, that so unprincipled an adventurer succeeded in occupying even a secondary position; strange that he retained it so long as he did, and strangest of all that, to this day, his memory has filled no insignificant place in the grateful thoughts of America.

But Washington, though by no means blind to Lee's defects in character and temper, could hardly resist so fierce a blaze of popularity, or what was afterwards so justly characterized by Hamilton as "a certain preconceived and preposterous notion of his being a very great man," which always "operated in his favor."

At this time, too, there was a very natural feeling of doubt as to the ability of any provincial officers to assume the leadership and direction of the military forces which were to be arrayed against the tried and veteran soldiers of Europe. Confidence was not great enough in the schools and training of the Indian and French wars, when compared with the fields of battle and the lines of contravallation in which the great commanders of Europe had learned their art, and although those wars had developed elements of power which were destined to exert a lasting influence upon the military history of America and the world, still America could not yet shake off that feeling of dependence which demanded encouragement and sympathy from European skill and training.

Braddock's defeat, in 1755, on the fatal field of the Monongahela, had illustrated the comparative value of the disciplined regular of Europe and the rifleman of America; and even while Congress was deliberating, on the very day on which Lee was appointed, Bunker Hill was repeating the lesson learned by heart long before the close of the war—a lesson, which neither Howe nor Clinton ever forgot in their subsequent career in America. Nor was it long before America learned that among her own true and faithful children, born on the soil, she had many better and braver soldiers than



the man in whom she thus "placed so large a share of the most ill-judged confidence."

In "soliciting the command he was honored with" in the American service, he seems to have used sufficient caution and reserve to enable him to make terms with his employers. Upon accepting the commission tendered him by Congress, he resigned that which he had still held in the British service, in a letter to Lord Barrington, dated June 22d, 1775, renouncing his half-pay, at the same time repudiating the opinion, that an officer on half-pay is to be considered in the service, as erroneous and absurd.

His biographers have given him the credit which he claimed for himself in this connection, for making great personal and pecuniary sacrifices—thus proving the integrity of his principles, and the sincerity of his professions. His fortune was ample; his income was nearly £1000 a year, besides having large grants of land in the colonies. He afterwards found occasion frequently to enumerate these sacrifices, and said, "such were the fortune and income which I staked on the die of American liberty, and I played a losing game; for I might lose all, and had no prospect or wish to better it."

This was not the light in which those who knew him best regarded the matter. Ralph Izard to Arthur Lee, August 21, 1775, says, after expressing his satisfaction with General Lee's letter to Burgoyne: "Lee has acquired considerable property; and I have been assured, by people who know well, that he would never run the risk of losing it, by entering into the service of America. The part he has acted, after taking such a considerable time to think of it, is a proof that he does not think there is much danger of that." He adds: "I wish to know whether he is appointed second or third in command, or whether the Congress has taken any measures to prevent his ever becoming, by the death of superior officers, commander-in-chief. Have these officers taken an oath to obey the orders of Congress? This I take for granted, as it seems absolutely necessary."

The journals of Congress are conclusive, and no ingenuity can soften his direct stipulations for indemnification, into an acceptance of voluntary pledges from Congress. How strong the contrast, at every point of his American career, with that of his great chief—the leader of our armies! But to the record.

General Lee was appointed on the 17th June, 1775. On the following Monday, the 19th, a committee, consisting of Mr. Henry, Mr. Lynch, and Mr. John Adams, waited upon him, by order of Congress, to inform him of his appointment, and request his answer whether he would accept the command.

“The Committee returned and reported, that they had waited on General Lee, and informed him of his appointment, and that he gave for answer: ‘That he had the highest sense of the honor conferred upon him by the Congress; that no effort in his power shall be wanting to serve the American cause; but before he entered upon the service, he desired a conference with a committee, to consist of one delegate from each of the associated Colonies, to whom he desired to explain some particulars respecting his private fortune.’

“Whereupon, Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Samuel Adams, Mr. Hopkins, Mr. Dyer, Mr. Philip Livingston, Mr. William Livingston, Mr. Ross, Mr. Rodney, Mr. Johnston, Mr. Henry, Mr. Caswell, and Mr. Lynch, were appointed as a Committee to confer with General Lee.

“The Committee returned, and reported, that they had conferred with General Lee, who had communicated to them an estimate of the estate he risked by this service.

“Whereupon, *Resolved*, That these Colonies will indemnify General Lee for any loss of property which he might sustain by entering into their service; and that the same be done by this or any future Congress, as soon as such loss is ascertained.”

If any doubt should rest upon the matter with this evidence, it must be forever dispelled by that which follows, showing how the transaction was completed.

Immediately after the repulse of the British before Charleston, two days after the date of Lee's despatch announcing it to Congress, the President of South Carolina wrote a letter, from which the following extracts are copied :

J. RUTLEDGE TO SAM. ADAMS AND STEPH. HOPKINS.

"CHARLESTON, S. C., July 4, 1776.

. . . "I trouble you with a few lines respecting the General [Lee]. He thinks his situation rather awkward.

"You know the Congress engaged to indemnify him against any loss he might sustain, by entering into our service, and that immediately upon such loss being ascertained. He has purchased an estate in Virginia for about 5 or £6000, of that colony ; and, having borrowed the money to pay for it, of Mr. Morris, the estate is under mortgage to him. The General drew bills for £3000 sterling, on his agent in England ; they are returned protested, and he has no doubt that his property in England is confiscated. So he does not know that he has any estate at all ; nor has he any security, but the mere word of honor of a body, which is not permanent, but frequently changeable, and composed even already, of many other members than those who made this promise. He wishes to be sure of something, and asked my opinion as a friend, whether there would be any impropriety in his applying to Congress on this head. He is desirous for the present, that the Congress should discharge the incumbrance on this estate, so that it may be clear, and advance a sum towards improving it.

"I think the request exceedingly reasonable, and told him my opinion that the Congress really should do this, without his application, and that I would write to some gentlemen of the Congress on this head. I wish, therefore, that you, as well as others, gentlemen of my particular acquaintance (to whom I now write) would urge this matter to Congress.

“I really think the continent so much obliged to this gentleman, that they should gratify him in every reasonable requisition. This colony, I am sure, is particularly indebted to him, for he has been indefatigable, ever since his arrival here, and you know he is an enthusiast in our cause.

“I conceive no injury can possibly arise to the continent, by complying with what he wishes for. Should his English property remain untouched, he can readily refund. Should it be taken, the payment of this money and more, is a mere matter of justice. But, on the other hand, should there be delay and indifference on the part of Congress, it may produce disgust, or some other ill-consequence. This is my own fear. I have no authority for it, from any thing which has fallen from the General. I therefore must repeat my request, and make it a very earnest one, that you will obtain some speedy resolution respecting this matter, such as I have above hinted, which may afford him satisfaction, and do him honor. I am, gentlemen, &c.”

President Rutledge also wrote to Duane, Livingston, and Jay of New York, urging their co-operation; and Mr. Jay in a letter to Edward Rutledge recognizes the propriety, policy, and justice of the measure; adding, “I am, for my own part, clear for it, and wish with all my heart that it may take place.”

On the 7th of October, 1776, General Lee informed Congress of his arrival in Philadelphia, in obedience to a resolution directing him, in case the British troops left the Southern Colonies, to repair to Philadelphia, and there wait the orders of Congress. Being ordered to attend in Congress, he gave an account of the state of affairs in the Southern Department. On the same day the Committee appointed to take into consideration the application from the President of South Carolina, in behalf of General Lee, reported:

“That this Congress having a just opinion of the abilities of General Lee, applied to him to accept a

command in their service, which he readily agreed to, provided the Congress would indemnify him against any loss which he might sustain in consequence thereof, he having at that time a considerable sum of money due to him by persons in the kingdom of Great Britain, which he was resolved to draw from thence as soon as possible. That the Congress unanimously concurred in his proposal; that he accordingly entered into their service; that he has since drawn bills upon his agent in England, which bills have been returned protested. That General Lee having purchased an estate in Virginia, the purchase-money for which has been long due, is likely to sustain, by means of the protested bills, many injuries, unless this house prevent the same by an advance of 30,000 dollars; whereupon

*“Resolved,* That the sum of thirty thousand dollars be advanced to General Lee, upon his giving bond to the treasurer to account for the same, and taking such steps in conjunction with Robert Morris, Esq., on behalf of the Congress, as will secure the most effectual transfer of his estate in England, to reimburse the Congress for the advance now made him.”

Immediately after his appointment, General Lee accompanied Washington to Cambridge, receiving everywhere in his journey through the country, marks of respect and high appreciation, hardly less than those bestowed upon Washington.

[I omit here, the sketch of his services in Rhode Island, New York, and the South, simply remarking as I pass, that his good fortune in gaining credit for military skill did not desert him.]

General Ward's resignation, after the evacuation of Boston, made Lee second in command, standing next in rank to Washington. By the reputation of his imputed successes in the Southern Department, he was marvellously elated, growing more and more disposed to regard himself as one whose advice ought to be followed and submitted to in all things. Prosperity and glory brought out his vices in full strength;

and he seems to have determined to exalt himself at all hazards.

There was something in the enthusiasm of his admirers in Congress to account for the freedom with which he criticized every movement—censuring Congress themselves for their blunders and want of spirit; and he unquestionably looked forward to an influence in their councils which should principally direct the future operations of the war.

Upon his arrival from the south at Philadelphia, he had been directed by resolution of Congress, October 7th, to repair to the camp at Harlem, with leave if he thought proper, to visit the posts in New Jersey.

At about the same time John Jay wrote from Fish-kill to Edward Rutledge: "If General Lee should be at Philadelphia, pray hasten his departure—he is much wanted at New York;" whence Colonel Malcom had written to John McKesson a month before, "General Lee is hourly expected, as if from heaven, with a legion of flaming swordsmen."

He arrived at New York, October 14th, whence he wrote this characteristic letter to Gates:

#### GENERAL LEE TO GENERAL GATES.

"FORT CONSTITUTION, October 7<sup>th</sup> 14th.

"MY DR. GATES:

"I write this scroll in a hurry—Colonel Wood will describe the position of our Army, which in my own breast I do not approve—*inter nos* the Congress seem to stumble every step—I do not mean one or two of the Cattle, but the whole Stable—I have been very free in delivering my opinion to 'em—in my opinion General Washington is much to blame in not menacing 'em with resignation unless they refrain from unhinging the army by their absurd interference—Keep us Ticonderoga; much depends upon it—We ought to have an army on the Delaware—I have roar'd it in the ears of Congress, but *carent auribus*.

"Adieu, my Dr. Friend; if we do meet again, why we shall smile.  
Yours, C. LEE."

Here again the prevailing opinion of his military ability accorded to him great credit, which he was never backward in continuing to claim, for the movements by which Howe was prevented from cutting off the communications of the American Army with the country, and thus bringing them between the British army and fleet. But the truth is that more than a month before the arrival of Lee, it was agreed in a council of general officers, held at General McDougall's quarters, 12th September, 1776, that the principal part of the army should march into the country, so as to keep in advance of the British columns, and that eight thousand men only should remain for the defence of the Heights—Mount Washington and its dependencies. It was of this council that General McDougall afterwards said (7th January, 1782,) in respect to the retreat from New York, that "none were opposed to it, but a *fool*, a *knave*, and an *obstinate, honest man*." Even when Howe's intentions became more obvious by the accumulation of his numbers at Throg's Neck, the council of the 16th October, at which Lee was present, decided, with but one dissenting voice, to carry out the plan of the 12th of September, the only change being to reduce the force left to defend Fort Washington, which it was agreed, without any recorded dissenting voice, should be retained as long as possible. If Lee was the author of that change, perhaps it may still further diminish his credit for military skill, when the history of the capture of Fort Washington shall be rewritten.

Four days before, he wrote to Congress from Amboy, expressing his confidence that the attack of General Washington's lines was a measure too absurd for a man of Mr. Howe's genius; that they would put New York city in a respectable state of defence, and direct their operations towards Philadelphia, either by the Delaware or through the Jerseys. His plan for this exigency was an army of ten thousand men to be assembled and stationed somewhere about Trenton. It is not unreas-



unable to suppose that Lee would have been gratified with such a command.

When the army marched from the heights of Harlem, Lee's division was stationed near King's Bridge, to protect the rear, and he found ample occupation during the tedious transportation of the baggage and artillery, which occupied several days. Fortunately the British made no serious attempt to disturb his progress; and he at length brought up his division, joining the main army at White Plains, where he is said to have condemned the position of the Continental Army as most execrable. The post, however, seemed to be too strongly taken for Howe to attempt it; and he retired towards King's Bridge.

As soon as it became certain that his next movement would be to the Jerseys, and so to threaten Philadelphia, Washington crossed the Hudson, and threw himself in front of the enemy, leaving General Lee in the position which he then occupied, with a force of seven thousand men, while Heath was ordered to the defence of the Highlands, with three thousand men.

At that time, commenced that famous retreat through the Jerseys, so thrilling in its interest to every American heart. And from the day on which Lee was left in a separate command, he seems to have been governed by one purpose and animated by one spirit—a spirit of anything but patriotism—a purpose to gratify his own personal ambition, at any cost. I have spoken of his friends in Congress. That there was a party in Congress, during the whole subsequent period of the war, bitterly hostile to Washington, is the only theory which can explain the most serious difficulties which he had to encounter. The unavoidable misfortunes and unfortunate issue of the campaign, though originating in causes entirely beyond his control, stimulated the spirit of hostility to the Commander-in-Chief, which not long afterwards assumed a most formidable aspect, not only in Congress, but in the army. For my present purpose, however, it is unnecessary to do more than allude to

these intrigues, as Lee's power to do mischief in this connection was nearly at an end.

Fort Washington fell on the 16th November, and as Fort Lee was only of importance in conjunction with it, that too was speedily abandoned. On the 20th, Lee wrote to a prominent member of Congress (a letter I believe never before made public).

CHARLES LEE TO BENJAMIN RUSH.

CAMP, November 20th, 1776.

"MY DEAR RUSH:

"The affair of Fort Washington cannot surprise you at Philadelphia more than it amazed and stunned me. I must entreat that you will keep what I say to yourself; but I foresaw, predicted, all that has happened; and urged the necessity of abandoning it; for could we have kept it, it was of little or no use. Let these few lines be thrown into the fire, and in your conversations only acquit me of any share of the misfortune—for my last words to the General were—draw off the garrison, or they will be lost. You say I ought to desire the General to press the Congress for the necessary articles. I have done it a thousand times, and the men are now starving for the want of blankets. I confess your apathy amazes me. You make me mad—You have numbers—your soldiers do not want courage—but such a total want of sense pervades all your counsels that Heaven alone can save you. Inclosed are some hints. I could say many things—let me talk vainly—had I the powers I could do you much good—might I but dictate one week—but I am sure you will never give any man the necessary power—did none of the Congress ever read the Roman History? Adieu, my dear Rush,

"Yours most sincerely,

"CHARLES LEE."

"1st. You must have an army—this army cannot be had on the terms proposed—give 'em the full bounty and list 'em only for a year and a half—in short you

have so bungled your affairs that you must come into any terms.

"2d. Put some military man at the head of the Board of War.

"3d. Strip even yourselves of blankets."

We can hardly misunderstand his allusion to the political expedient to which the Roman senate resorted, in order to repress disorders among the people, and to unite the forces of the commonwealth against its enemies. By it, they placed themselves and the state, for a limited time, under the power of a single person, who, with the title of Dictator, or Master of the People, should at his pleasure, dispose of the state and of all its resources; thus intrusting all power to a single man, on the sole security of his personal character, arbitrary and irresponsible, and limited only in the time of its exercise.

The crisis indeed demanded a Dictator; but it was a happy day for humanity which saw a Washington invested with such powers as these. How different the fate of America in other hands! Well might the committee of Congress say, in communicating to him their resolutions: "Happy it is for this country, that the general of their forces can safely be intrusted with the most unlimited power, and neither personal security, liberty, nor property, be in the least degree endangered thereby."

The hint to "put some military man at the head of the Board of War," was acted upon in the following year, when the board was new modelled and General Gates appointed to preside.

Lee was now at the height of his popularity and influence; the star of his destiny was at its zenith. Many seemed to have believed that there was "no officer in the army of equal experience and merit," and it was said that he was "the idol of the officers, and possessed still more the confidence of the soldiery."

How entirely the popular judgment was carried away in the exaggerated estimate which had been formed of

Lee's military capacity, is illustrated by the fact that, even in the military family of Washington, was one who, although his personal relations were of the most intimate, responsible, and confidential nature, was swept away with the current. The following letter is already famous in the history of that period. The copy I use, has been corrected by a careful comparison with one "signed by Reed, and endorsed in his own hand"—in the autograph collection of Mr. Tefft, of Savannah, Georgia.

JOSEPH REED TO CHARLES LEE.

HACKENSACK, November 21st, 1776.

"DEAR GENERAL :

"The letter you will receive with this, contains my sentiments with respect to your present station ; but besides this, I have some additional reasons for most earnestly wishing to have you where the principal scene of action is laid. I do not mean to flatter or praise you at the expense of any other ; but I confess, I do think that it is entirely owing to you, that this army and the liberties of America, so far as they are dependent on it, are not totally cut off. You have decision, a quality often wanting in minds otherwise valuable ; and I ascribe to this our escape from York Island, from King's Bridge, and the Plains ; and I have no doubt, had you been here, the garrison of Mount Washington would now have composed a part of this army ; under these circumstances, I confess I ardently wish to see you removed from a place where I think there will be little call for your judgment and experience, to the place where they are like to be so necessary. Nor am I singular in this my opinion ; every gentleman of the family, the officers, and soldiers, generally, have a confidence in you ; the enemy constantly inquire where you are, and seem to me to be less confident when you are present.

"Colonel Cadwallader, through a special indulgence, on account of some civilities shown by his family to General Prescott, has been liberated from New York

without any parole. He informs, that the enemy have a southern expedition in view; that they hold us very cheap in consequence of the late affair at Mount Washington, where both the place of defence and execution were contemptible. If a real defence of the lines was intended, the number was far too few; if the Fort only, the garrison was too numerous by half. General Washington's own judgment, seconded by representations from us, would have saved the men and their arms; but, unluckily, General Greene's judgment was contrary. This kept the General's mind in a state of suspense till the stroke was struck. Oh, General! an indecisive mind is one of the greatest misfortunes that can befall an army: how often have I lamented it this campaign!

"All circumstances considered, we are in a very awful and alarming state, one that requires the utmost wisdom and firmness of mind.

"As soon as the season will admit, I think yourself and some others should go to Congress, and form the plan of the new army; point out their defects to them, and, if possible, prevail on them to bind their whole attention to this great object—even to the exclusion of every other. If they will not, or cannot, do this, I fear all our exertions will be vain in this part of the world. Foreign assistance is soliciting, but we cannot expect they will fight the whole battle—but artillery and artillerists must be had, if possible.

"I intended to have said more, but the express is waiting, and I must conclude with my clear and explicit opinion, that your presence is of the last importance.

"I am, with much affection and regard,

"Your most affectionate,

"Humble Servant,

"J. REED.

"Major Gen. LEE,  
"White Plains."

Washington's instructions to Lee were, that if the enemy should remove the whole, or the greatest part of their force, to the west of Hudson's river, he should

follow, with all possible dispatch, leaving the militia and invalids to cover the frontiers of Connecticut, etc. These instructions were very soon made positive and peremptory orders, in view of the necessities of the retreating army. On the 20th of November, Washington thought it advisable that he should move—on the 21st he advised Lee “that the publick interest requires” it. Lee on the same day writes to the President of the Council of Massachusetts, that “before the unfortunate affair of Fort Washington, he was of opinion that the two armies—that on the east and that on the west side of North river—must rest each on its own bottom; that the idea of detaching . . . from one side to the other was chimerical; but to harbor such a thought in our present circumstances is absolute insanity.” He further advises the President that “we must depend upon ourselves.” On the same day he received from Reed a “short billet, which he did not well understand.” The following extract from General Heath’s published journal, furnishes the explanation:

“*November 20th.* Just at evening, an express which General Heath had sent down to General Washington, before he had any knowledge of what had happened, returned with a most alarming account of what he had seen with his own eyes, viz., that the Americans were rapidly retreating, and the British as rapidly pursuing. The Adjutant-General [Reed] wished to write to General Lee, but he had neither pen, ink, nor paper with him. The Light-Horseman had a rough piece of wrapping-paper in his pocket, and the Adjutant-General had an old pencil. Bringing these two together, he wrote to Gen. Lee: ‘Dear General, we are flying before the British. I pray——’ and the pencil broke. He then told the Light-Horseman to carry the paper to General Lee, and tell him that he was verbally ordered to add, after I pray—‘you push and join us.’ The Light-Horseman, when he arrived at Gen. Heath’s, was both fatigued and wet. He requested that one of his brother horsemen might proceed to Gen. Lee; but he was told

that no other could discharge the duty enjoined on him by the Adjutant-General, and that Gen. Lee might wish to make many inquiries of him. He was therefore refreshed and pushed on."

General Lee, instead of moving his division, or any part of it, wrote back to General Heath that he had just received a recommendation, not a positive order, from General Washington, to move the corps under his command to the other side of the river. After giving some presumptive reasons for General Washington's recommendation, which he finds it impossible to comply with, to "any purpose," he desires and requests General Heath to order two thousand of his corps, under a Brigadier-General, to cross the river, and wait Washington's further orders—promising to replace that number of troops, from his own command, as soon as "a necessary job" was finished—which he believed would "be finished to-morrow."

General Heath referred to his instructions, which he found did not admit of any construction in accordance with Lee's request, which he therefore did not comply with.

Lee continued his attempts to interfere with Heath's command; and, on the 23d November, announced his intention to take two thousand from that division into the Jerseys. Afterwards, upon Heath's refusal to do so, he undertook to order the detachment himself, but finally desisted, upon more mature reflection.

On the 22d, he again addressed President Bowdoin, and here he takes a bolder tone:

#### GEN. LEE TO THE PRESIDENT OF MASS. COUNCIL.

"CAMP NEAR PHILLIPSBURG, 22d November, 1776.

"SIR:

"Indecision bids fair for tumbling down the goodly fabrick of American freedom, and with it, the rights of mankind. 'Twas indecision of Congress prevented our having a noble army, and on an excellent footing



"Twas indecision in our military councils which cost us the garrison of Fort Washington, the consequence of which must be fatal, unless remedied in time by a contrary spirit. Enclosed I send you an extract of a letter from the General, on which you will make your comments; and I have no doubt, but that you will concur with me in the necessity of raising immediately an army to save us from perdition. Affairs appear in so important a crisis, that I think even the resolves of the Congress must no longer too nicely weigh with us. We must save the community in spite of the ordinances of the Legislature. There are times when we must commit treason against the laws of the State for the salvation of the State. The present crisis demands this brave, virtuous kind of treason. For my own part (and I flatter myself my way of thinking is congenial with that of Mr. Bowdoin's) I will stake my head and reputation on the propriety of the measure . . . ."

On the 24th, Washington from Newark, corrects Lee's mistake, in supposing that he wanted any portion of Heath's command. "It is your division I want to have over." At this time he writes so fully and explicitly, as to remove the possibility of any misapprehension. He also cautions him about his route, and desires frequent expresses to advise of his approaches. On the same day, Lee at last acknowledges receipt of orders, and promises to endeavor to put them in execution; while at the same time he writes to Reed, in answer to his "most obliging, flattering" letter of the 21st; laments with him "that fatal indecision," which is worse than stupidity or cowardice; half excuses, half justifies his delay; intimates an enterprise which he has on hand, and which he waits for—when, he concludes, "I shall then fly to you; for, to confess the truth, I really think our Chief will do better with me than without me."

On the 26th, he still lingers, responding very tartly

to General Heath, who had told him that he "considered it to be his duty to obey his instructions, especially those which are positive and poignant"—that "the Commander-in-chief is now separated from us; I of course command on this side the water; for the future I will and must be obeyed."

On the 27th, Washington tells Lee, that his previous letters had been so full and explicit, he thought it unnecessary to say more, and confessed his expectation that Lee would have been sooner in motion. Lee replies on the 30th, assuring Washington that he had done all in his power—that he will pass the river in two days more, when he will be glad to have instructions; but says also, "I could wish you would bind me as little as possible, not from any opinion, I do assure you, of my own parts, but from a persuasion that detached generals cannot have too great latitude, unless they are very incompetent indeed." He added in a postscript "that he was a good deal distressed by the strictness of General Heath's instructions."

Washington from Brunswick, Dec. 1st, entreats Lee to hasten his march, or it may be too late to answer any valuable purpose. On the 3d, he repeats his anxiety; while Congress, on the 2d, had resolved that the committee for establishing expresses be directed to send Colonel Stewart, or any other officer, express to General Lee, to know where and in what situation he and the army with him were.

Lee, finally quitting Westchester with great reluctance, began to pass the river on the 2d December. He writes from Haverstraw on the 4th, acknowledging the receipt of Washington's pressing letter; and concludes, "It is paltry to think of our personal affairs when the whole is at stake; but I entreat you to order some of your suite to take out of the way of danger my favourite mare, which is at Hunt Wilson's, three miles the other side of Princeton!"

We next hear of him at Ringwood Iron Works, where, having lost three of his best camp horses, he

sends back an express to Heath to advertise them, offering a reward for their recovery.

From Pompton, on the 7th, he writes again to Governor Cooke of Rhode Island, to whom he gives the benefit of his views on the qualifications of general officers:—"Theory joined to practice, or a heaven-born genius, can alone constitute a general. As to the latter, God Almighty indulges the modern world very rarely with the spectacle; and I do not know, from what I have seen, that he has been more profuse of this ethereal spirit to the Americans than to other nations."

General Washington had, in the meantime, attempted to return to Princeton from Trenton, but was obliged to recede, and was now on the other side of the Delaware, still without any certain intelligence of General Lee, and utterly unable to account for the slowness of his march.

From Morristown, on the 8th of December, Lee writes to Congress and to Washington, stating his force at four thousand; and that if he was not assured that Washington was considerably reinforced and very strong, he would immediately join him! As it was, he intended to take post at Chatham, and so hang on the enemy's rear.

Well might General Greene think at this juncture, that General Lee must be confined within the lines of some general plan, or else his operations would be independent of those of the Commander-in-chief!

On the 9th, he is at Chatham, "in hopes," as he writes to Heath, "to re-conquer the Jerseys, which were really in the hands of the enemy, before my arrival." At this time, too, he continues his letters to the New England Governors, and impresses upon them that unless they renew their exertions with redoubled vigor, all is lost; suggesting also, the propriety of a convention of the New England States, to consult on the great affairs of their safety, and of counteracting the enemy in their future operations.

On the 10th and 11th, Washington renewed his en-

treaties, reminding Lee of the fatal consequences that must attend the loss of Philadelphia, and that the force with him was weak and entirely incompetent to save that city. These letters did not reach Lee, but were received by his successor in the command. His disgraceful neglect of duty and disobedience of orders, were at last to have an end; and in the series of Providential interpositions, which we cannot fail to recognize with devout gratitude, for the preservation of American liberty, none is more striking than that which terminated at this time the power of Lee to do mischief to the cause.

Lee's last communication to Washington was dated at Morristown, December 11th, and is in his handwriting, although he speaks of himself in the third person. The original is endorsed: "From General Lee," and was read in Congress on the 10th February following:

GENERAL LEE TO GENERAL WASHINGTON.

"MORRISTOWN, December y<sup>e</sup> 11th, 1776.

"We have three thousand men here at present; but they are so ill-shod that we have been obliged to halt these two days for want of shoes. Seven regiments of Gates's corps are on their march, but where they actually are, is not certain. General Lee has sent two officers this day; one to inform him where the Delaware can be crossed above Trenton; the other to examine the road towards Burlington, as General Lee thinks he can, without great risk, cross the great Brunswick post road, and by a forced night's march, make his way to the ferry below Burlington. Boats should be sent up from Philadelphia to receive him. But this scheme he only proposes, if the head of the enemy's column actually pass the river. The militia in this part of the Province seem sanguine. If they could be sure of an army remaining amongst 'em, I believe they would raise a very considerable number."

This letter shows no intention to comply with the orders of Washington. He could have reached the Delaware by a forced march in a few hours, by the way of Vealtown, Germantown, Potterstown, Pitstown, and Alexandria, near which latter place he had been instructed to cross, and suitable preparations had been made to enable him to do so, by order of Washington. Under all the disadvantages of their condition, which were very great, the troops actually crossed, after being relieved of his command, at Easton, further up the river, on the 16th of December, and joined Washington on the 20th. Sullivan had changed the route to avoid a considerable body of the enemy, who were pushing forward on his left to intercept him, before he reached the river. He had received Washington's earnest letters of the 10th and 11th, addressed to Lee, and pressed on to join the main army as soon as possible. Having encamped at Germantown, on the night of the 13th, he marched the next day at 11 o'clock, and, diverging at Pitstown, reached Bethlehem township that night. On the 15th, he marched at daybreak and all day, reaching Phillipsburg, at 10 o'clock at night. Some of the troops crossed the Delaware to Easton the same night, but they were not all safe with their baggage beyond the river until the next day.

It appears to have been Lee's purpose to seize a favorable opportunity, when the British army had extended their line towards the Delaware by Brunswick and Princeton, to make an independent demonstration in their rear, and cut their line of communication. It was obvious that the British chain was too extensive, and invited such a movement. There could be no doubt of the advantages to accrue in the event of its success; and the presence of so considerable a force in his rear was a source of no little anxiety to General Howe, especially as the volunteers in the country were very active and enterprising. About one thousand militia were at this time collected under the command of Colonel Jacob Ford, jun., at Springfield, seven miles

west of Elizabethtown, to watch the motions of the enemy, their own subsequent motions to be directed according to circumstances. Lee's force was also continually increasing; three regiments from Ticonderoga, which he had intercepted with orders to join him, were daily expected; and he promised the principal men that a detachment should remain for the protection of the State.

He lingered about Morristown several days, and ordered Sullivan to march for Germantown, early in the morning of the 12th of December. These were the last orders received by Sullivan from Lee. The troops encamped in the woods near Vealtown, a village in Bernard township, on the night of the 12th, and renewed their march on the morning of the 13th, towards Germantown.

Lee himself was at Baskingridge on the morning of the 12th, from which place he wrote to the Rev. James Caldwell, an active and influential patriot, at or near Chatham, with whom and Colonel Ford, at or near Springfield, he seems to have kept up at this time a very constant communication. Caldwell's reply shows his zeal to gratify Lee's anxiety to be constantly advised of the motions of the enemy, and assured him that their army had very generally marched forward; indeed, all except guards of the different posts. He also states that it was considered advisable to move the militia back to Chatham, as for various reasons assigned, it was thought they could better serve the cause by lying at that place "till the expected army approaches for their support."

The tenor of Lee's entire correspondence indicates his purpose to act separately, not only with his own troops, but with those coming from the Northern army, although Washington had given him no such instructions; but on the contrary, expected those troops to march forward and join him as soon as possible. In this connection, Mr. Caldwell's "expected army" is significant.

Whether any other motives than those connected with his wish to obtain the intelligence just mentioned influenced his movements, I am unable to state. General Greene, in a letter written after receiving news of his capture, spoke of his "strange infatuation," and General Sullivan of the "fatality" by which he was induced to expose himself; but it is certain that neither entertained for a moment the suspicion that he designedly threw himself into the hands of the enemy, and such a design is incredible in view of all the circumstances of the case.

Still there may have been other motives of convenience or personal gratification, but certainly none could be less creditable than his insatiable ambition and ungovernable selfishness. His conduct did not admit of excuse, much less of justification; and it is unnecessary to speculate upon the probable consequences, had he been successful. "Under the sole guidance of his own judgment and self-will, he was presumptuously driving on, and the misfortunes which followed were the result of his own obstinacy and misconduct, not of necessity."

About noon, on Friday, the 13th of December, 1776, General Lee, with several aids, and a small guard, were at White's tavern, near Baskingridge, seven miles from Morristown—twenty-one miles from the nearest post of the enemy, and four miles from the encampment, which his division had left in the morning.

The British had, at this time, pushed forward to the Delaware, with the hope of getting to Philadelphia. Their first division reached Trenton soon after the rear-guard of the American main army had crossed. Their rear division, which was commanded by Lord Cornwallis, halted at Maidenhead, six miles from Trenton, and at one o'clock on the morning of the 9th December, marched to Coryell's Ferry, thirteen miles higher up the Delaware, expecting to find boats there and in the neighborhood, sufficient to pass the river; but in this they were disappointed, as the Americans had taken the precaution to destroy or secure on the south side, all the



boats which could possibly be employed for that purpose.

The passage of the Delaware being thus rendered impracticable, Lord Cornwallis returned and took post at Pennington, where his division remained till the 14th of December, the first still continuing at Trenton, when "the weather having become too severe to keep the field, and the winter cantonments having been arranged, the troops marched from both places to their respective stations." I cannot help remarking, as I quote this complacent statement of General Howe, how soon Washington at Trenton and Princeton was to disturb his "arrangements," point out "the necessity of an alteration in the cantonments," and compel him to "find it impossible to hold posts of seventy or eighty miles in extent with only ten thousand men."

During Lord Cornwallis's stay at Pennington, a patrol of thirty dragoons from the Sixteenth Regiment (Burgoyne's Regiment of Queen's Light Dragoons), was sent out to gain further intelligence of Lee's division, whose progress they watched with great jealousy. Lieutenant-Colonel Harcourt (afterwards Earl Harcourt, F. M.), who is said to have expressed hopes before he left England, that he should take Lee, desired and obtained the direction of this detachment. Banastre Tarleton, afterwards so well known in the southern campaigns, at that time a cornet in the King's Dragoon Guards, and a volunteer with the forces in America, had the direction of the advanced guard of the party.

While scouring the country, they obtained intelligence of Lee's position, succeeded in surprising the guard, and surrounded the house before he was aware of his danger. Major William Bradford, one of his aids, who was present and escaped, stated that the party were conducted by a tory who was with General Lee the evening before, complaining of the loss of a horse taken by the army. He found where the General was to lodge and breakfast, and that he was to be at White's tavern about noon. He left them, rode eighteen miles

in the night to Brunswick, and returned with the party of Light Horse. Most of the American accounts of the affair agree in charging the tories with having betrayed him. On the other hand, the English accounts state that Harcourt's party fell in with a messenger, bearing a letter from Lee, who was induced by threats or promises to return as their guide. One states that "the wafer of the letter was still wet, which showed the writer was not far off." The accounts are not inconsistent—information may have been given by the tories, and as the Light Horse approached they may have seized the messenger, who had recently left the General.

Harcourt's disposition was made with great skill, and executed "with infinite address and gallantry." As he came in sight of the house, he detached Tarleton, who dashed forward with six men to secure the doors, followed by the remainder of the party at a distance of about one hundred paces. Harcourt immediately summoned the house, with threats to set fire to it, and put every man in it to the sword, if the General did not surrender.

The surprise was so complete that great consternation prevailed among the General's party. The Light Horse, however, were fired upon from the house, and two or three were killed (one of whom was a cornet), and others wounded. There were several French officers with Lee, and one of them took aim at Colonel Harcourt with his fusil, which the Colonel observing, bent his head, and the shot took away the ribbon of his hair. He was immediately disposed of by the dragoons, and the fire from the house was very smartly returned. The General's guard had been carelessly disposed at an out-building, and the sentry at the door of the house, when he saw the dragoons coming, at first mistook them for his own people, but soon perceived his mistake by their swords, which were different from those used by the Americans. The guard rallied as the alarm was given, and attempted to join in the defence, but they were immediately overpowered with merciless severity.

Some of them were wounded, two were killed while attempting to escape, and the remainder probably owed their safety to Harcourt's haste and anxiety to make sure of his prize.

The only person who seems to have retained his presence of mind and behaved with suitable courage on the occasion, was M. Jean Louis de Virnejoux, a French gentleman, who had been appointed to the rank and pay of Captain by brevet, and commissioned accordingly on the 19th September, 1776. He had already in his few weeks of service, won the best opinions of his qualities as a gentleman and soldier; and, on this occasion, he acted with the greatest bravery and resolution in defending the General. Had his advice been taken, or all who were there evinced the same spirit, probably Lee would have escaped. It is a real pleasure to speak of such a man, and to brighten this page with the record of his virtues.

The resistance, however, was short. Harcourt again summoned the house, renewing his threats with a solemn oath. Finding concealment impossible, and further resistance useless, Lee made his appearance at the door, and in the most submissive manner, surrendered his sword to Colonel Harcourt, begging him to spare his life. Several of the English accounts state that he fell upon his knees to Harcourt, and all agree that he behaved in a most cowardly manner, apparently frantic with terror and disappointment. One writer says, after describing his humiliation to Harcourt, "suddenly recovering his panic, he flew into a violent rant of his having for a moment obtained the supreme command—giving many signs of wildness and of a mind not perfectly right."

Captain Thomas Harris, afterwards Lord Harris, states, in his journal, that "Lee behaved as cowardly in this transaction as he had dishonorably in every other. After firing one or two shots from the house, he came out and entreated our troops to spare his life." Harris continues, "Had he behaved with proper spirit,

I should have pitied him, and wished that his energies had been exerted in a better cause. I could hardly refrain from tears when I first saw him, and thought of the miserable fate in which his obstinacy has involved him. He says he has been mistaken in three things:

“1st. That the New England men would fight.

“2d. That America was unanimous, and

“3d. That she could afford two men for our one.”

He was somewhat roughly handled on being seized, and his captors, if they did not treat him with great indignity, certainly displayed very little regard for his comfort or appearance. He had presented himself without his hat or outside coat, and although he earnestly requested permission to get them, was very peremptorily refused.

He was mounted on the guide's horse, tied on both legs and arms, and with one of his aids who was mounted behind a dragoon, was hurried away at a furious speed towards Brunswick, where upon his arrival, “about three hours afterwards, the cannon in the British camp played furiously, rejoicing on the occasion;” which was also signalized with much less dignified demonstrations of delight by the soldiery. He entertained some hope of a rescue at first, and told Harcourt he was “not sure of his prey;” but as his expectation diminished, and finally all hope of it vanished, he became sullen and very much dispirited. He said to his captors—admitting the weakness of the American army, and his own confidence in British strength and zeal, when roused,—“The game is nearly at an end.”

Afterwards, on being brought in at Brunswick, he is said to have claimed the benefit of Howe's proclamation, and demanded to be received under it; but, on being refused, as being found in arms and not entitled to it, and told that he would be tried as a deserter, he flew into the most unbounded rage, and exclaimed against the repeated acts of false faith and treachery which had reduced him to his present situation. He also desired an interview with General Howe,

which was not granted at that time ; and I have reason to believe that General Howe refused to see him for a long time after his capture. This must have been a severe trial to Lee, for he had before publicly professed "the highest love and reverence" for General Howe, stating that he had "courted his acquaintance and friendship, not only as a pleasure, but as an ornament," and "flattered himself that he had obtained it."

Soon after his capture, he addressed the following letter to his old friend and associate, Captain Primrose Kennedy, of the 44th Regiment :

GENERAL LEE TO CAPTAIN KENNEDY.

"SIR :

"The fortune of war, the activity of Colonel Harcourt, and the rascality of my own troops, have made me your prisoner. I submit to my fate, and I hope that whatever may be my destiny, I shall meet it with becoming fortitude ; but I have the consolation of thinking, amidst all my distresses, that I was engaged in the noblest cause that ever interested mankind. It would seem that Providence had determined that not one freeman should be left upon earth ; and the success of your arms more than foretell one universal system of slavery. Imagine not, however, that I lament my fortune, or mean to deprecate the malice of my enemies ; if any sorrow can at present affect me, it is that of a great continent apparently destined for empire, frustrated in the honest ambition of being free, and enslaved by men, whom unfortunately I call my countrymen.

"To Colonel Harcourt's activity every commendation is due ; had I commanded such men, I had this day been free ; but my ill-fortune has prevailed, and you behold me no longer hostile to England, but contemptible and a prisoner !

"I have not time to add more, but let me assure you, that no vicissitudes have been able to alter my sentiments ; and that as I have long supported those senti-

ments in all difficulties and dangers, I will never depart from them but with life.

“C. LEE.”

The aid, who was taken with Lee, was M. de Gaiault. This gentleman, a Lieutenant-Colonel in the French service, had recently arrived at Boston with powder and arms, in the Hancock and Adams, Captain Smith, from Nantes. On his way to tender his services to General Washington, he had joined General Lee, who made him his aid-de-camp, only two days before he was taken. When he heard the firing of the Light Dragoons, he ran out hastily, and was immediately made prisoner. He shared their rude treatment with Lee, in respect to which he afterwards presented a remonstrance to General Howe. At Brunswick, M. Gaiault was fortunate enough to meet an old acquaintance, a British officer, who provided him with quarters where he was taken good care of, and supplied him with necessaries. He was also under much less restraint than his fellow-prisoner.

The intelligence of Lee's capture reached his troops as they were on the march. The statement of a private soldier in one of the Rhode Island Regiments, preserves for us the account of an eye-witness. He saw Major Bradford, who had escaped, as he rode up to the line. General Sullivan met him and received the news, which immediately spread through the whole division. They halted some time in the road, and Sullivan “rode through the line giving orders, to show that they still had a commander left, and did not appear to regret the loss of Lee.” The writer adds, “I confess it was not a subject of any grief to me, as I had known him before he was appointed in our army, and thought we could manufacture as good generals out of American stuff as he was.” The prevailing impression, however, must have been one of discouragement; and others mention the “dejected spirits” with which they renewed their march and pursued their route to the Delaware.



Sullivan attempted to regain him, but the rapidity of Harcourt's movement was such as to make all attempts fruitless. One party pursued the dragoons for several miles, but "were too late," and rejoined the army in the evening at Germantown.

One additional memorial of that eventful period remains to be noticed. The last letter of General Lee before his capture, was addressed to his friend Gates, who had been ordered to hasten on from the northern army, with all the disposable troops, and join Washington beyond the Delaware. He had left the Hudson at Esopus (Kingston), and thence proceeded through the then uncultivated country of the Minisink, nearly on the route of the present Delaware and Hudson Canal, inclining to the left to Sussex Court House, about thirty miles northwest of Morristown, in the hope of falling in with and joining the division of General Lee.

The letter is significant enough, and is an appropriate finale to Major General Charles Lee's military service in the Jerseys in 1776. I hold the original letter in my hand, from which I will read.

#### GENERAL LEE TO GENERAL GATES.

"BASKING RIDGE, Dec'r y<sup>e</sup> 13<sup>th</sup>, 1776.

"MY DR GATES :

"The ingenious manoeuvre of Fort Washington has unhing'd the goodly fabrick We had been building—there never was so damn'd a stroke—*entre nous*, a certain great man is most damnably deficient—He has thrown me into a situation where I have my choice of difficulties—if I stay in this Province I risk myself and Army and if I do not stay the Province is lost for ever—I have neither guides Cavalry Medicines Money Shoes or Stockings—I must act with the greatest circumspection—Tories are in my front rear and on my flanks—the Mass of the People is strangely contaminated—in short unless something which I do not expect turns up We are lost—our Counsels have been weak to the last degree—as to what relates to yourself if you



think you can be in time to aid the General I wou'd have you by all means go You will at least save your army—it is said that the Whigs are determin'd to set fire to Philadelphia if They strike this decisive stroke the day will be our own—but unless it is done all chance of Liberty in any part of the Globe is forever vanish'd—Adieu, my Dr Friend—God bless you.

“CHARLES LEE.”

Upon Lee's capture, great exultation was manifested by the British. They boasted of having taken the American Palladium—that the Americans could not stand long, as Lee was their chief man. The historian Gibbon, who had taken his seat in Parliament at the beginning of the contest between Great Britain and America; and supported with many a sincere and silent vote, the measures of the administration; preserves the gossip of the day in London in one of his letters: “Lee is certainly taken . . . We are not clear whether he behaved with courage or pusillanimity when he surrendered himself; but Colonel Keene told me to-day that he had seen a letter from Lee since his confinement. He imputes his being taken to the alertness of Harcourt and cowardice of his own guard; hopes he shall meet his fate with fortitude, etc.” Gibbon adds: “It is said he was to succeed Washington;” and also, referring to the news from Trenton, “We know nothing certain of the Hessians, but there *has* been a blow.”

Among the Americans, his loss was greatly and sincerely deplored—although the circumstances attending his capture were almost equally regretted. The most generous spirit was manifested in Washington's private as well as public correspondence—full of regret for the loss which the service had sustained, and sympathy for Lee's personal sufferings—although he was obliged to regard the misfortune as the more vexatious, as it was by the captive General's own folly and imprudence, and without a view to effect any good, that he was taken prisoner.

He was still detained at Brunswick, a close prisoner under a strong guard, when Washington turned upon his pursuers, and at Trenton and Princeton justified the expectation of the Pennsylvania Council of Safety, who, in condoling with him on the loss of Lee, expressed their hope that it might be in his power to close the campaign with honor to himself, and leave General Howe in a situation which should afford him little reason to boast.

These movements threw the enemy into great consternation at Brunswick, where were the British stores and baggage, and for a time an ominous anxiety prevailed in the lines. One of the English officers who was present, says: "The captive General Lee was not without his terrors on this extraordinary and sudden turn of fortune. General Matthews not knowing well how to dispose of him in this intricacy of situation, he followed the wagons, and was marched, guarded, through the line, then under arms, in silent and momentary expectation of the enemy—a perfect stranger to every thing that had happened, or to what end he was destined; he could only judge from the hurry and apparent confusion that something uncommon must have occasioned it; for every circumstance at that juncture seemed so big with event, that no person dared speak to him as he passed by, or take upon them to explain what he eagerly wished to discover. His looks presented a picture of dread and horror; strongly expressive of his persuasion that his fate had overtaken him, at a time when he apprehended no immediate danger—he was soon relieved from his distress."

He was brought to New York from Brunswick, on Monday, the 13th of January, 1777, still very strictly guarded. Rooms were fitted up for his reception in the City Hall, where he was treated with consideration and humanity. He was allowed to converse freely with the officers in whose custody he was placed, except "on the subject of the dispute with the colonies." The two officers on guard always dined with him, and he had leave

to invite any other person he pleased. He was from the first regarded in the light of a traitor to his king, amenable to British military law as a deserter; and he unquestionably owed his life to the firmness of Washington and the Congress. Exaggerated accounts of the severity of his confinement produced remonstrance and threats of retaliation, and Howe's reply to the remonstrance being unsatisfactory, Congress directed some harsh measures with reference to five Hessian field officers and Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell, then prisoners, who were made special hostages for Lee's safety; but these were mitigated by the earnest interference of Washington. Still the exchange of prisoners was interrupted, until the demand should be complied with that General Lee be recognized as a prisoner of war.

General Howe was much embarrassed in respect to the law of the case, and wrote home for instructions. With characteristic professional caution, being "afraid of falling into a law scrape," he desired to have the opinion of the law officers of the Crown, in case he should be instructed to bring his prisoner to trial. There had been some recent decisions in England, which had an awkward look, in respect to damages, in case Lee should escape conviction and bring an action for false imprisonment. The case of certain Bengal officers was referred to, and Lee's was still stronger. Being only on half-pay when he wrote his letter of resignation to Lord Barrington, he would undoubtedly plead: first, that a half-pay officer was not amenable to military law, and secondly, if he was, he had a right to resign. The reply of Lord George Germaine was—"As you have difficulties about bringing General Lee to trial in America, it is His Majesty's pleasure that you send him to Great Britain by the first ship of war." One of the London newspapers of the time states, that he was actually "placed on board a vessel at New York three several times in order to be brought to England; and the ship was absolutely on sail when Washington's

letter to General Howe arrived at New York, the consequence of which was that the ship was stopped and the General relanded."

Sir William Howe being unable to make any impression upon Washington, and being apprehensive that a close confinement of the Hessian officers would be the consequence of sending Lee to Great Britain, and that this would occasion much discontent among the foreign troops, retained Lee for further instructions. In a subsequent letter from the minister, he informs General Howe, that his "motives for postponing General Lee's departure for Great Britain are approved by the king."

Congress had approved the course pursued by Washington, but expressed a new and "determined resolution to carry into execution the law of retaliation; that if any persons belonging to, or employed in, the service of the United States or any of them who now are, or hereafter may be, prisoners to Lord or General Howe, or any other commander of his Britannic Majesty's forces by sea or land, shall be sent to the realm of Great Britain, or any part of the dominion of the said king, to be there confined in common gaols of Great Britain, or any other place or places of confinement in pursuance of any act or acts of the British Parliament, or any other pretence whatever; it is the resolution of this Congress, to treat the prisoners now in our power, and such as hereafter may fall into our hands, in a manner as nearly similar as our circumstances will admit."

On the same day on which this resolution was adopted by Congress, June 10th, 1777, General Washington had very frankly, but firmly, indicated the same policy, in a letter to General Howe, in which he said, distinctly referring to the case of General Lee, "I think it necessary to add, that your conduct towards prisoners will govern mine."

Satisfied that no arguments would induce "Mr. Washington" to recede from his determination, and that it was "necessary to put an end to a fruitless negotiation,"

the king at last reluctantly consented to instruct Howe, "that Lee, having been struck off the half-pay list, shall, though deserving the most exemplary punishment, be deemed a prisoner of war, and he may be exchanged as such when you may think proper."

This despatch was received by General Howe on the 12th of December, 1777. General Lee had been kept a close prisoner during the whole year that had elapsed since his capture. During most of the time he remained in the City Hall; but while General Howe was pursuing his brief campaign in New Jersey, and secretly maturing the plan for the southern expedition, he was removed, June 7th, 1777, for a time on board the *Centurion* man-of-war, where he was permitted to walk the quarterdeck.

Two days afterwards he wrote a letter to General Washington on the subject of Lord Drummond's parole. This individual, whose attempts at negotiation form a curious though unimportant episode in the history of the war, had given his parole of honor, that he would hold no correspondence directly or indirectly with those who were in arms against the colonies, nor go into any port or harbor occupied by the enemy, nor on board their ships. He had most flagrantly and openly violated his parole, and the most favorable construction of his intentions could only show "that an overweening vanity had betrayed him into a criminal breach of honor." General Washington had occasion to administer to him a well-merited reproof "in terms that could not be flattering" to his Lordship, who attempted to vindicate himself, but without success. "The facts in the case were too obvious and indisputable to be extenuated by any testimony he produced, or by the mere assertion of honorable motives."

General Lee, however, professed to have really thought Lord Drummond an injured man, and offered himself as a volunteer instrument to obtain some reparation from General Washington. Nothing could be more characteristic than his letter, which follows :

## GENERAL LEE TO GENERAL WASHINGTON.

"CENTURION, June 9th, 1777.

"MY DEAR SIR :

"Multiplicity of business, the miscarriage of letters, or some accident has prevented you from doing what really is in my opinion an act of justice—I mean clearing up to the world the charge brought against Lord Drummond for a breach of Parole; after having read all the Papers relative to this subject, his letters to you, yours to him, Capt. Vanderput's, and the Parole, I declare solemnly that it does not appear to me that there is any one thing in his Lordship's conduct which merited even the shadow of censure. The intention of the Parole in restraining him from going on board any of the King's ships was certainly to prevent intelligence being given of the state of the Continent. As this was manifestly the intention I could almost say that if even he had gone on board the Asia voluntarily altho' the terms of the Parole would not have been literally adhered to, the spirit would not have been violated, as it cannot possibly be supposed that he could give any intelligence which would have been new to Capt. Vanderput, to and from whose ship people were passing and repassing every day—but Capt. Vanderput's evidence puts it beyond all doubt that his Lordship did not go voluntarily but was compelled on board.

"A public charge from persons we esteem sinks deep in the mind of a man of sentiment and feeling. I really believe Lord Drummond to be such, and have reason to think that he has an esteem for you, at least from all I can learn he has ever spoken of you in the handsomest terms. Now, as it appears to me that there can be no doubt from the concurrence of every testimony of his having adhered as scrupulously as possible to the spirit of the Parole, as the affair is of so delicate a nature, as I am acquainted with your way of thinking, I repeat that I must ascribe it rather to a miscarriage of his letters than to any other cause that you have not



done him that justice which, had you received them, I am persuaded you must have thought his due. I can perceive he is very much hurt at the charge, and his sensibility, I confess, increases the good opinion I before had of him—Not only therefore justice to him but let me add, my Dear General, a regard for you obliges me to wish that this affair may be cleared up in some manner satisfactory to the party I think injured; it is a duty which I know if omitted cannot fail of giving much uneasiness hereafter to a man of your rectitude and humanity.

“I must observe in addition that I cannot imagine his Lordship’s return after an absence of three months could administer any reasons for suspicion, for he must either have remained in the West Indies or have returned to some port in North America, as he was prevented by the spirit of the Parole from going to England,—indeed the terms of the Parole implied an obligation to return to New York. His long absence likewise from the Continent rendered it impossible for him to furnish any intelligence of the situation of affairs. Should it be asked why a man in my present situation should interest myself so warmly in this business with which I myself had no concern? I must answer that not only my love of justice, my duty as a Gentleman, and my regard for you enjoin the task, but that I really feel myself personally obliged to Lord Drummond, for since my confinement he has shown a most generous, humane and disinterested attention to me. In the course of conversation this business was accidentally brought on the carpet. As I was a stranger to the circumstances, I was anxious to be made acquainted with them. He submitted the papers to my perusal—I really thought him injured; assured him that it must have proceeded from mistake or the miscarriage of his letters, and offered myself as a volunteer instrument to obtain some reparation. Let me hear from you, My Dear General, as soon as possible, and on this subject.

“God preserve and bless you and send you every



possible felicity, is the prayer of one who is most truly and affectionately yours,

“CHARLES LEE.”

“As I would not unnecessarily swell the packet I have been contented with sending the letters to and from Capt. Vanderput—which I think sufficient—This I do on the supposition that those sent have miscarried.”

Mr. Sparks has given us the substance of Washington's answer. “With his usual firmness, he replied that he had thoroughly investigated the subject at the time; that he had no disposition to injure Lord Drummond; that the impression left on his mind was deep and decided; and that no circumstances had since come to light, which tended to alter his opinion.”

General Howe received the king's consent in Philadelphia, but transmitted orders to New York immediately to terminate Lee's long confinement. He was released on the 25th December, on parole, to the full liberty of the city and its limits. From this time his condition was much more agreeable. Sir Henry Clinton and General Robertson placed horses at his command, and he took up his quarters with two of his oldest and warmest friends in the British service. In short, his situation was “rendered as easy, comfortable and pleasant as possible, for a man who is in any sort a prisoner.” In February, 1778, he won a prize of five hundred dollars, in the Alms House Lottery.

The embarrassment with respect to the exchanges of prisoners still continued, and his captivity was prolonged several months. It was not until late in the month of March that he was transferred to Philadelphia, with the prospect of a speedy exchange. He arrived in that city on the 25th of March. His parole was enlarged on the 5th April, when he availed himself of the privilege to visit the American camp and the Congress. On the 9th April, he arrived at Yorktown,

in Pennsylvania, where Congress was then sitting. At this time, he had the opportunity of witnessing the denouement of the intrigues which, after his own capture removed him from the scene, had elevated his old associate Gates into a rival of Washington! But the lesson was lost upon him. While he was at Yorktown, his exchange for Major General Prescott was finally arranged, 21st April, but he did not rejoin the army at Valley Forge until a month later—May 20th, 1778. The history of that month belongs to another part of this review of his career.

I have said that the accounts of his harsh treatment were exaggerated. For this there is sufficient authority besides his own statement in a letter to Robert Morris, that "the General [Howe] has indeed treated me in all respects with kindness, generosity, and tenderness."

The English had a much less favorable opinion of Lee's abilities than he had secured in America. When it was reported in Europe several months before, that he had been captured, one of the wisest servants of the Crown, Sir Joseph Yorke, then minister at the Hague, wrote to Mr. Eden—that if he had not a thorough conviction in his own mind that the "unfortunate affair" in America would be brought to a happy issue in the course of the summer, he "should really have been concerned for the taking of Lee, convinced, from what I have seen and know of him, that he was the worst present which could be made to any army." And again, after he was taken: "I was one of those who expressed a sincere concern at the taking of Lee, in which nothing gave me pleasure but the masterly partisan stroke of Colonel Harcourt: it is impossible but Lee must puzzle every thing he meddles in, and he was the worst present the Americans could receive; my opinion has been verified much sooner than I wished, as the only stroke like officers which they have struck, happened after his being made prisoner." The capture of the Hessians and the masterly manœuvres against the Brit-

ish, had enabled them to "find that he was not the only efficient officer in the American service."

The times, when Lee was taken, were gloomy enough for the Americans. They were indeed, as Thomas Paine then wrote in his stirring appeal to the patriots of '76, "the times that tried men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot would indeed, in such a crisis, shrink from the service of his country; while he that stood firm then, deserved the love and thanks of man and woman!" In the English camp, it was thought that Howe's successes had intimidated the leaders of the rebellion, and were about to induce a general submission—that further opposition was despaired of by all America, except a few desperate men in Washington's army, and that army reduced to less than thirty-five hundred men. The campaign projected by the British, too, for 1777, was portentous of evil to the United States, and expected in Europe to be decisive, where the friends of the Court were rejoicing upon the promising aspect of affairs in America; and the whole tone and spirit of the royalists in New York, was confident in the extreme.

The scattered notices which may be gleaned in the correspondence written from New York, at this time, are too vague and general, as well as uncertain, to furnish much light as to Lee's occupations; but I find one account which is particularly interesting. It states "that he has employed his leisure hours mostly in writing; and some were of opinion that he was employed in a plan of reconciliation, as he used often to say, that if the Americans had followed his advice, matters could never have gone to such a length. His tone is changed, and as he was always remarkable for his freedom of speech, he makes no scruple of condemning the Americans in very plain terms, for continuing the contest."

His tone was indeed changed:

" . . . . Quantum mutatus ab illo  
Hectore!"

It was at this time that he abandoned the cause to which he had so solemnly devoted himself. He was wanting in the hour of trial! At the touch of misfortune, like the angel's spear, the disguises of cowardice and treachery fell away, and the pages upon which he recorded his own condemnation, vindicate his claim to a high place upon that list of traitors, of whom—to the sorrow and shame of humanity be it spoken—Judas was not the first, nor Benedict Arnold the last! While the Continental Congress were denouncing their most solemn vengeance in retaliation for any injury which he might receive at the hands of his captors—while Washington, forgetting the insults and injuries which had led to his misfortunes, was straining every nerve in his behalf, and urging his requests upon Congress with constant zeal and sympathy—HE WAS PLANNING FOR THE ENEMIES OF AMERICA, THE RUIN OF THE CAUSE!

I hold the document in my hand—in Lee's own autograph—unmistakable and real. It is indorsed in the handwriting of Henry Strachey, who was then Secretary to the Royal Commissioners, Lord and Sir William Howe:

*“MR. LEE'S PLAN—29th March, 1777.”*

*“As on the one hand it appears to me that by the continuance of the War America has no chance of obtaining the ends She proposes to herself; that altho by struggling She may put the Mother Country to very serious expence both in blood and Money, yet She must in the end, after great desolation havock and slaughter, be reduc'd to submit to terms much harder than might probably be granted at present—and as on the other hand Great Britain tho' ultimately victorious, must suffer very heavily even in the process of her victories, evry life lost and evry guinea spent being in fact worse than thrown away: it is only wasting her own property, shedding her own blood and destroying her own stregnth; and as I am not only perswaded from the*

high opinion I have of the humanity and good sense of Lord and General Howe that the terms of accommodation will be as moderate as their powers will admit, but that their powers are more ample than their Successors (should any accident happen) would be vested with, I think myself not only justifiable but bound in conscience to furnish all the lights, I can, to enable 'em to bring matters to a conclusion in the most compendious manner and consequently the least expensive to both Parties—I do this with the more readiness as I know the most generous use will be made of it in all respects—their humanity will incline 'em to have consideration for Individuals who have acted from Principle and their good sense will tell 'em that the more moderate are the general conditions; the more solid and permanent will be the union, for if the conditions were extremely repugnant to the general way of thinking, it would be only the mere patchwork of a day which the first breath of wind will discompose and the first symptoms of a rupture betwixt the Bourbon Powers and Great Britain absolutely overturn—but I really have no apprehensions of this kind whilst Lord and General Howe have the direction of affairs, and flatter myself that under their auspices an accommodation may be built on so solid a foundation as not to be shaken by any such incident—in this persuasion and on these principles I shall most sincerely and zealously contribute all in my power to so desirable an end, and if no untoward accidents fall out which no human foresight can guard against I will answer with my life for the success.

“From my present situation and ignorance of certain facts, I am sensible that I hazard proposing things which cannot without difficulties be comply'd with; I can only act from surmise, therefore hope allowances will be made for my circumstances. I will suppose then that (exclusive of the Troops requisite for the security of Rhode Island and N. York) General

*Howe's Army (comprehending every species, British, Hessians and Provincials) amounts to twenty thousand men capable to take the field and act offensively; by which I mean to move to any part of the Continent where occasion requires—I will suppose that the General's design with this force is to clear the Jersey's and take possession of Philadelphia—but in my opinion the taking possession of Philadelphia will not have any decisive consequences—the Congress and People adhering to the Congress have already made up their minds for the event; already They have turn'd their eyes to other places where They can fix their seat of residence, carry on in some measure their Government; in short expecting this event They have devis'd measures for protracting the War in hopes of some favourable turn of affairs in Europe—the taking possession therefore of Philadelphia or any one or two Towns more, which the General may have in view, will not be decisive—to bring matters to a conclusion, it is necessary to unhinge or dissolve, if I may so express myself, the whole system or machine of resistance, or in other terms, Congress Government—this system or machine, as affairs now stand, depends entirely on the circumstances and disposition of the People of Maryland Virginia and Pensylvania—if the Province of Maryland or the greater part of it is reduc'd or submits, and the People of Virginia are prevented or intimidated from marching aid to the Pensylvania Army the whole machine is dissolv'd and a period put to the War, to accomplish which, is, the object of the scheme which I now take the liberty of offering to the consideration of his Lordship and the General, and if it is adopted in full I am so confident of the success that I wou'd stake my life on the issue—I have at the same time the comfort to reflect, that in pointing out measures which I know to be the most effectual I point out those which will be attended with no bloodshed or desolation to the Colonies. As the difficulty of passing and of re-passing the North River and the apprehen-*



sions from General Carlton's Army will I am confident keep the New Englanders at home, or at least confine 'em to the East side the River; and as their Provinces are at present neither the seat of Government strength nor Politicks I cannot see that any offensive operations against these Provinces would answer any sort of Purpose—to secure N. York and Rhode Island against their attacks will be sufficient. On the supposition then, that General Howe's Army (including every species of Troops) amounts to twenty or even eighteen thousand men at liberty to move to any part of the Continent; as fourteen thousand will be more than sufficient to clear the Jersey's and take possession of Philadelphia, I would propose that four thousand men be immediately embark'd in transports, one half of which shou'd proceed up the Patomac and take post at Alexandria, the other half up Chesepeak Bay and possess themselves of Annapolis. They will most probably meet with no opposition in taking possession of these Posts, and when possess'd they are so very strong by nature that a few hours work and some trifling artillery will secure them against the attacks of a much greater force than can possibly be brought down against them—their communication with the shipping will be constant and sure—for at Alexandria Vessels of a very considerable burthen (of five or six hundred Tons for instance) can lie in close to the shore, and at Annapolis within musket shot—all the necessaries and refreshments for an Army are near at hand, and in the greatest abundance—Kent Island will supply that of Annapolis and every part on both banks of the Patomac that of Alexandria. These Posts may with ease support each other, as it is but two easy days march from one to the other, and if occasion requires by a single days march, They may join <sup>A</sup> and conjunctly carry on their operations wherever it shall be thought eligible to direct 'em; whether to take possession of Baltimore or post themselves on some spot on the Westward bank of the Susquehanna which is a



point of the utmost importance—but here I must beg leave to observe that there is a measure which if the General assents to and adopts will be attended with momentous and the most happy consequences—I mean that from these Posts proclamations of pardon shou'd be issued to all those who come in at a given day, and I will answer for it with my life—that all the Inhabitants of that great tract southward of the Patapsico and lying betwixt the Patomac and Chesepeak Bay and those on the eastern Shore of Maryland will immediately lay down their arms—but this is not all, I am much mistaken if those potent and populous German districts, Frederic County in Maryland and York in Pensylvania do not follow their example—These Germans are extremely numerous, and to a Man have hitherto been the most staunch Assertors of the American cause; but at the same time are so remarkably tenacious of their property and apprehensive of the least injury being done to their fine farms that I have no doubt when They see a probability of their Country becoming the seat of War They will give up all opposition but if contrary to my expectations a force should be assembled at Alexandria sufficient to prevent the Corps detach'd thither from taking possession immediately of the place, it will make no disadvantageous alteration, but rather the reverse—a variety of spots near Alexandria on either bank of the Patomac may be chosen for Posts equally well calculated for all the great purposes I have mention'd—viz—for the reduction or compulsion to submission of the whole Province of Maryland for the preventing or intimidating Virginia from sending aids to Pensylvania—for in fact if any force is assembled at Alexandria sufficient to oppose the Troops sent against it, getting possession of it, it must be at the expence of the more Northern Army, as they must be compos'd of those Troops which were otherwise destin'd for Pensylvania—to say all in a word, it will unhinge and dissolve the whole system of defence. I am so confident of the event that I will vent-

*ure to assert with the penalty of my life if the plan is fully adopted, and no accidents (such as a rupture betwixt the Powers of Europe) intervenes that in less than two months from the date of the proclamation not a spark of this desolating war remains unextinguished in any part of the Continent.*

*“<sup>A</sup> On the Road from Annapolis to Queen Ann there is one considerable River to be pass’d, but as the ships boats can easily be brought round from the Bay to the usual place of passage or Ferry, this is no impediment if the Two Corps chuse to unite They may by a single days march either at Queen Anns or Mulbrough.”*

Such was the scheme of treason which Charles Lee, Major General, second in command in the American army of the Revolution, took “the liberty of offering to the consideration of his Lordship and the General,” His Majesty’s Commissioners, Lord and Sir William Howe! Its form and character do not admit the supposition that he had been tampered with, solicited, or approached in any way on the subject. It must have been the voluntary offering of cowardice, eager to purchase safety by treachery, and thus to open the way back to allegiance and protection! He had evidently regarded himself as “the Palladium,” and with his own capture had lost all hope for the success of the Americans. So he threw himself upon the generosity of the Howes, and tried to make a virtue of his own selfishness; betraying his associates, while with a characteristic appeal for sympathy, he thought their “humanity” would incline Lord and General Howe “to have consideration for individuals who have acted from principle.”

Although we are left mainly to conjecture the circumstances under which this plan was submitted to the Howes, it is proper to make such inferences as are warranted by their subsequent conduct of the war.

From the beginning of the winter of 1776–77, General Howe had been sending to the ministry his plans

for the next campaign. His primary object, repeatedly urged, was the junction of the two armies up and down the Hudson River. His own movement northward, accompanied with an irruption into New England, it was said, would "strike at the root of the rebellion, and put those Independent Hypocrites between two fires"—and "open the door wide for the Canada army." The principal features of these plans had received the approbation of the king, who, with the ministry, Parliament, and the nation, undoubtedly expected, by the possession of the Lakes and the North River, to complete the separation of the northern and southern colonies, and conquer America in detail.

But in his secret letter of the 2d of April, the General totally relinquished the idea of any offensive operation, except that to the southward, and a diversion occasionally upon the Hudson River. He informed the Secretary of State that the principal part of the plans formerly proposed could no longer be thought of; that the Jerseys must be abandoned, and Pennsylvania invaded only by sea. At the same time he transmitted to the ministry a copy, in advance, of his confidential letter of the 5th April, to Sir Guy Carleton, then commanding in Canada, in which he said that little assistance was to be expected from him to facilitate the approach of the northern army—as "the operations already determined upon," would not admit of his detaching a corps to act up the Hudson River, in the beginning of the campaign. In the same letter, he informed General Carleton that he had intrusted to a special messenger "information of too delicate a nature to commit to paper, and of the utmost importance in favor of the northern army advancing to Albany." The new expedition which he had planned, was a "great secret" in New York, even after the embarkation of a portion of the troops. When it came out, it is said that Sir Henry Clinton refused to believe it possible that Howe intended carrying the army to the southward. In the manuscript notes upon Stedman's history attributed to him, is the follow

ing: "I owe it to truth to say there was not I believe a man in the army except Lord Cornwallis and General Grant, who did not reprobate the movement to the southward, and see the necessity of a co-operation with General Burgoyne."

A contemporary writer says: "It is impossible for the mind of man to conceive the gloom and resentment of the army, on the retreat from the Jerseys, and the shipping them to the southward; nothing but being present and seeing the countenances of the soldiers, could give an impression adequate to the scene; or paint the astonishment and despair that reigned in New York, when it was found that the North River was deserted, and Burgoyne's army abandoned . . . The ruinous and dreadful consequences were instantly foreseen and foretold; and despondence or execration filled every mouth. Had there been no Canada army to desert or to sacrifice, the voyage to the southward could only originate from the most profound ignorance or imbecility."

The evidence in the House of Commons, in the subsequent Parliamentary examinations, indicates that Howe did not consult many officers, and that almost all opinions were against the movement as soon as it was known. Lord George Germaine, on the 8th June, 1779, defending the ministry, said: "that he did not understand the object of the southern expedition by the Capes of Virginia," and in general, the "absurd voyage to Chesapeake" was afterwards condemned, as a pernicious measure, producing fatal effects—the loss of Burgoyne's army, the French alliance, and so indirectly, most of the subsequent advantages of the Americans.

The influence of Lee's plan is easily recognized in the movements of the Howes, which were then so unintelligible to both armies. Their natural distrust of him must have had great weight in their determination, and may have prevented them from adopting it in full. They never satisfactorily explained their motives, though seriously challenged in the subsequent debates

in Parliament. They might well be reluctant to admit that they had followed the suggestions of one who was personally so obnoxious to the king and ministry. Their failures certainly would not increase their readiness to allude to what had proved so fatal a gift. So they seem to have preserved the secret of the expedition. "A mystery" in Parliament then—it has continued to remain so to this day.

But however all this may be—whether or not, future investigations and discoveries shall prove that the plan did mainly influence the Howes in their determination—you will not hesitate in agreeing with me that the failure was no fault of its author. It is conceived in as wicked a spirit of treason as ever existed. To the extent of his knowledge of the then circumstances of both armies, it is perfectly adapted for entire success, and that it did not ruin the cause, we may thank that God who ruleth in the affairs of men.

There are many interesting points in which this "Plan" of treason, touches the subsequent career of its author, both in the American service and after his disgrace. I shall at present allude to but one of them, at the risk of leaving you in doubt which was the greater—his hypocrisy or his impudence.

Just before the evacuation of Philadelphia, Washington became convinced that the enemy intended to march through the Jerseys. Lee, only three days before they actually crossed the river, wrote to the Commander-in-chief as follows:

"My opinion is that if they are in a capacity to act offensively, they will, either immediately from Philadelphia, or, by a feint in descending the river as far as New Castle, and then turning to the right, march directly and rapidly towards Lancaster, by which means they will draw us out of our present position, and oblige us to fight on terms perhaps very disadvantageous; or that they will leave Lancaster and this army wide on the right, endeavour to take post on the lower parts of the Susquehanna, and by securing a communi-

*cation with their ships sent round into the bay for this purpose, be furnished with the means of encouraging and feeding the Indian war, broke out on the western frontier. This last plan I mention as a possibility, but as less probable than the former.*

“If they are not in a capacity to act offensively, but are still determined to keep footing on the continent, there are *strong reasons to think, that they will not shut themselves up in towns, but take possession of some tract of country, which will afford them elbow room and sustenance, and which is so situated as to be the most effectually protected by their command of the waters ;* and I HAVE PARTICULAR REASONS *to think that they have cast their eyes for this purpose on the lower counties of Delaware, and some of the Maryland counties on the Eastern shore. If they are resolved on this Plan, it certainly will be very difficult to prevent them, or remove them afterwards, as their shipping will give them such mighty advantages.* Whether they do or do not adopt any of these plans, there can no inconvenience arise from considering the subject, nor from devising means of defeating their purposes, on the supposition that they will.

“In short, I think it would be proper to put these queries to ourselves. Should they march directly towards Lancaster and the Susquehanna, or indirectly from New Castle, what are we to do? Should they, though it is less probable, leave this army and even Lancaster, wide on the right, and endeavour to establish themselves on the lower parts of the Susquehanna, what are we to do? And, should they act only on the defensive, and attempt to secure to themselves some such tract of country as I have mentioned, what measures are we to pursue? These are matters I really think worthy of consideration.”

Washington's reply of the same date, 15th June, 1778, contains the following passages :

“I have received your letter of this date, and thank you, as I shall any officer, over whom I have the honor



to be placed, for his opinion and advice on matters of importance—especially when they proceed from the fountain of candor, and not from a captious spirit, or an itch for criticism . . . and here let me again assure you, that I shall be always happy in a free communication of your sentiments upon any important subject relative to the service, and only beg that they may come directly to myself. The custom, which many officers have, of speaking freely of things, and repro-bating measures, which upon investigation, may be found to be unavoidable, is never productive of good, but often, of very mischievous consequences.”

Lee seems to have had from the beginning of his service in the Continental army, a passion for a negotiation with the British Generals. Soon after he arrived before Boston, in 1775, his correspondence with his old friend Burgoyne, led to a proposal for a meeting which might “induce such explanations as might tend, in their consequences, to peace.” He submitted the proposal to the Massachusetts Provincial Congress, whose reply, while it renewed the expression of their confidence in his wisdom, discretion, and integrity, hinted so strongly at the probable distrust and jealousy, which might arise, that the project was abandoned. His first letter to Burgoyne was written from Philadelphia, just before his appointment to the army, and before he sent it, “he had the precaution to read it to several members of the Continental Congress.” Even then he was guilty of a duplicity which falls little short of treachery. He held a language official and a language confidential, writing a private letter to Burgoyne (which has never yet seen the light) expressly referred to in the following letter from the British Secretary for Foreign Affairs to the French Minister. Is it unreasonable to suppose that Lee’s confidences may have disclosed those early intimations so guardedly given of the secret aid of France, which occasioned the first step towards a foreign alliance by the appointment of the secret Committee of Foreign Affairs in 1775?



## LORD ROCHFORD TO COUNT DE GUINES.

"September 8th, 1775.

"Milord Rochford presente ses complimens à son Excellence Monsieur le Compte de Guines, et a l'honneur de lui remettre les lettres imprimées de M. le General Burgoyne et M. Lee, et le prier de vouloir bien les lui renvoyer à son loisir. Milord a l'honneur de confirmer à son excellence ce qu'il lui assura hier au matin touchant ce qui a été confié en écrit au General Burgoyne par M. Lee sur son honneur. Ces assurances se trouvent dans une lettre particuliere et confidentielle de M. Lee, laquelle n'est pas imprimée, et on ne sera pas fâché d'être en état de le contredire authentiquement."

Lee's last published letter to his old companion in arms was dated December 1, 1775. On the 4th, he wrote from the Camp on Prospect Hill, to his friend Rush :

"I have written a parting letter to Burgoyne, which in my opinion is the best of my performances. I believe it does not tally with your political creed in some parts—but *I am convinced that you have not virtue enough for independence ; nor do I think it calculated for your happiness ; besides I have some remaining prejudices as an Englishman*—but you will judge whether they are honest and liberal—if they shock you, be gentle in your censures."

Again, on his way through New Jersey to join Washington at Harlem, in 1776, he suggested to Congress a conference with Lord Howe, by some gentlemen in the simple character of individuals who are supposed to have influence, and in whom they could confide, to demand what terms he had to offer. This was just one month after the Staten Island conference of the character and results of which he could hardly have been ignorant.

With Sir Henry Clinton, too, at Charleston, he was exchanging compliments, in 1776, and *in 1778, just before the evacuation of Philadelphia, and the British retreat across New Jersey, he was in correspondence with that officer*—a correspondence which, as well as later performances of a similar character, will be more fully noticed hereafter, in connection with the Battle of Monmouth, and his subsequent career. Much of the evidence of his unworthiness, in my possession, is so connected with his conduct on that occasion, and the discussions which followed, as to make that the proper place to present it. At present, I must content myself with the direct proof of the principal fact, with such brief illustration as the occasion will allow.

Lord and General Howe, in the month of February, 1777, are said to have attempted to open a negotiation with the Congress through General Lee. I am unable to resist the conclusion, that this correspondence, as it agrees in point of time, formed a part of Lee's attempt to be of service to the Crown, by betraying the cause of America. The rumors which prevailed in England and among the Loyalists in America, as well as the British army, indicate a strong expectation that Lee's application to Congress was about to result in important changes in affairs. He was supposed to be high in favor, and the style of his first letters indicates great confidence in himself. This confidence was not without foundation, as we have seen, although his capture had shaken the opinions of some, and led others to canvass his merits more carefully than ever before. Some questioned the justice of Congress in their anxiety to protect and prefer him in the exchange of prisoners, while others censured him bitterly and insinuated that he was treacherous.

On the 9th of February, he wrote to Washington, enclosing a letter to Congress, which the Howes had permitted him to send. He says: "As Lord and General Howe have given me permission to send the enclosed to the Congress, and as the contents are of the

last importance to me, and perhaps not less so to the community, I most earnestly entreat, my dear General, that you will despatch it immediately, and order the express to be as expeditious as possible." In the letter to Congress, which was enclosed, General Lee requested that they would permit two or three gentlemen to repair to New York, to whom he might communicate what deeply interested himself, and in his opinion the community. He says: "The most salutary effects may and I am convinced will result from it; and as Lord and General Howe will grant a safe conduct to the gentlemen deputed, it can possibly have no ill consequences." He expressed his wish that some of the gentlemen composing the Committee at Philadelphia might be nominated. Robert Morris, George Clymer, and George Walton, were the members of this Committee. Congress having adjourned from Philadelphia to Baltimore on the 12th of December, 1776, assembled in the latter city on the 20th; and, on the next day, these gentlemen were appointed to execute such Continental business as might be proper and necessary to be done at Philadelphia. General Lee also wrote with very great earnestness to the Virginia Lees in Congress, and to Robert Morris and Benjamin Rush, soliciting their influence to accomplish his object. He gave no hint of the nature of the proposed communication, and it is obvious that none of his correspondents were acquainted with any of his ulterior purposes. Washington himself could see no possible evil that could result from granting General Lee's request; and as he thought some good might, wished with all his heart that Congress had gratified him. In this view of the case, Morris concurred, while Richard Henry Lee finally coincided with the majority in Congress, although his personal feelings towards General Lee were such, as to cause a great struggle in the determination. On the 21st of February, Congress directed General Washington to acquaint Lee that they judged it altogether improper to send any of their body to communicate with

him, and that they could not perceive how a compliance with his request would tend to his advantage or the interest of the public. On the 26th of February, Lee was still impatiently expecting the gentlemen from Congress. He had urged the necessity of the greatest "possible expedition, as expedition in the present crisis of affairs is of very material consequence;" and "to save time in the present situation of affairs is a matter of the most material consideration."

About the middle of March, Major Morris was permitted to visit General Lee, who availed himself of the opportunity, when Morris returned, to transmit to the President of Congress the following pressing letter, reiterating his former request. It is evident that he was not aware of the action Congress had already taken upon his application.

#### CHARLES LEE TO JOHN HANCOCK.

"NEW YORK, March y<sup>e</sup> 19th, 1777.

"SIR :

"In the letter which sometime ago I did myself the honor of addressing to the Congress, altho' my own interests were deeply concerned, they were not simply so : I conceived those of America in general to be equally at stake. I am confident that had not some difficulties, which a man in my situation must be unacquainted with, prevented it, you would have comply'd with my request or favour'd me with the reasons of my disappointment. I most earnestly conjure you therefore, Sir, that as Lord and General Howe will grant 'em safe passports, two or three gentlemen may be deputed to converse with me on subjects of so great importance not only to myself but the community I so sincerely love—to prevent delay I have commissioned Mr. Morris to deliver this letter and flatter myself that I shall not be thought indecently pressing, when I request that the gentlemen may without loss of time be deputed, or

that the inexpediency of the measure may be signified to me by letter.

“I am, Sir, with the greatest respect,

“Your most obedient, humble servant,

“CHARLES LEE.”

This letter was received in Philadelphia on the 28th, and read in Congress on the 29th March, whereupon after due consideration they adopted the following resolution :

“*Resolved*, That Congress still judge it improper to send any of their members to confer with General Lee, upon the subjects mentioned in his letter.”

Those who are curious in dates will not fail to observe that this final action of Congress took place on the same day on which his treason was consummated. The reasons which prevailed in Congress against the measure were not fully known to him, but Robert Morris, in his letter of March 6th, 1777, to General Washington, hinted what he supposed to be “one of the most forcible arguments” used against it. He says: “I have not heard that it was used, but it occurred to me on reading General Lee’s letters; I mean the effect it might have at the Court of France, should they hear, as they undoubtedly would, that members of Congress visited General Lee by permission of the British Commissioners. The meeting with Lord Howe at Staten Island last summer injured Mr. Deane’s negotiations much, and retarded supplies intended for us.” Mr. Sparks states that he has seen a sketch of the debate of Congress on this subject, in which “the same argument was used to prove that the step was impolitic; and it was moreover said to be degrading, as Lord and General Howe could have no powers to treat of conciliation, except what they had derived from Parliament, which were known to extend only to receiving submissions and granting pardons. To send a committee to meet them under such circumstances, or to listen to their proposals through General Lee, was deemed inconsistent with the dignity of Congress.”

The proposition was denounced in the patriot publications of the day, as one of the repeated, insidious, and delusive attempts of the enemies of America to seduce the people from their virtuous efforts, by holding out false ideas of peace and reconciliation. The same view was taken in a letter written by William Gordon, the historian, on the 3d of April, 1777. He says: " . . . What has Lee been after of late? Suffering himself to be made a paw of by the Howes! If they have any proposals to make, fit for men of honor to offer, let them do it directly—they know how to send to the Congress."

A tory pamphlet published in 1780, referring to this affair, stated that "General Lee, while a prisoner at New York, wrote two letters to intimate the willingness of Lord and General Howe to suspend the war, and enter upon a treaty for a permanent peace; he was then high in the confidence of the Congress, and requested to be appointed one of their Commissioners on this important service."

The correspondence which I have examined, indicates a general feeling among the officers of the army in favor of the application. The following extracts present the best contemporary view of the whole subject, showing how sincere was the interest felt in Lee's personal welfare, and at the same time most conclusively, that no suspicion was entertained of his treachery.

#### GENERAL GREENE TO JOHN ADAMS.

"BASKINRIDGE, March 3, 1777.

" . . . I beg leave to make some enquiry into the policy of some late resolutions of Congress that respect General Lee. Why is he denied his request of having some persons appointed to confer with him? Can any injury arise? Will it reflect any dishonor upon your body to gratify the request of one of your Generals? Suppose any misfortune should attend him immediately, will not all his friends say, he was made

a sacrifice of? That you had it in your power to save him, but refused your aid? He says in his letter, he has something of the last importance to propose with respect to himself, and adds, perhaps not less so to the public. You cannot suppose that the General would hold out a proposition to bring us into disgrace or servitude? If he would, it is certainly our interest to know it seasonably, that we may not make a sacrifice for a man that is undeserving of it. If he would not, 'tis certainly a piece of justice due to his merit to give him a hearing. To hear what he has to propose cannot injure us, for we shall be at liberty to improve or reject his proposition.

"But let us consider it in another point of view. Will not our enemies, the disaffected, improve this report to our prejudice? They will naturally say that General Howe had a mind to offer some terms of peace, and that you refused to lend an ear or give him a hearing, and that you were obstinately bent on pursuing the war, evidently to the ruin of the people. Had you not consented to hear General and Lord Howe last spring, the public never would have been satisfied but there might have been an accommodation upon safe and honorable conditions. For my own part, I could wish you to give General Lee a hearing."

JOHN ADAMS TO GENERAL GREENE.

[BALTIMORE, March —, 1777.]

" . . . You ask why General Lee is denied his request. You ask, Can any injury arise? Will it reflect any dishonor upon Congress? I do not know that it would reflect any dishonor, nor was it refused upon that principle. But Congress was of opinion that great injuries would arise. It would take up too much time to recapitulate all the arguments which were used upon the occasion of his letter. But Congress was never more unanimous than upon that question. Nobody, I believe, would have objected against



a conference concerning his private affairs, or his particular case. But it was inconceivable that a conference should be necessary upon such subjects. Any thing relative to these might have been conveyed by letter. But it appears to be an artful stratagem of the two grateful brothers to hold up to the public view the phantom of a negotiation, in order to give spirits and courage to the tories, to distract and divide the whigs at a critical moment, when the utmost exertions are necessary to draw together an army. They meant, further, to amuse opposition in England, and to amuse foreign nations by this manœuvre, as well as the whigs in America, and I confess it is not without indignation that I see such a man as Lee suffer himself to be duped by their policy, so far as to become the instrument of it, as Sullivan was upon a former occasion . . .

“But further. We see what use government and the two houses make of the former conference with Lord Howe. What a storm in England they are endeavoring to raise against us from that circumstance.

“But another thing. We have undoubted intelligence from Europe that the ambassadors and other instruments of the British ministry at foreign courts made the worst use of the former conference. That conference did us a great and essential injury at the French court, you may depend upon it. Lord Howe knows it, and wishes to repeat it.

“Congress is under no concern about any use that the disaffected can make of this refusal. They would have made the worst use of a conference. As to any terms of peace, look into the speech to both Houses, the answers of both Houses. Look into the proclamations. It is needless to enumerate particulars which prove that the Howes have no power but to murder or disgrace us.”

Washington had deferred the communication of the first resolution of Congress, doubtless expecting that they would alter their determination. He finally wrote to Lee from Morristown, on the 1st of April, announce-

ing the result of his applications. The following letter is Lee's response to their refusal: written precisely one week after his Plan had been submitted to the Howes:

GENERAL LEE TO GENERAL WASHINGTON.

"NEW YORK, 5th April, 1777.

"MY DEAR SIR:

"It is a most unfortunate circumstance for myself, and I think not less so for the public, that the Congress have not thought proper to comply with my request. It could not possibly have been attended with any ill consequences, and might with good ones. At least it was an indulgence, which I thought my situation entitled me to. But I am unfortunate in everything, and this stroke is the severest I have yet experienced. God send you a different fate. Adieu, my dear General.

"Yours most truly and affectionately,

"CHARLES LEE."

This letter needs little comment in this connection. It has been hitherto, the occasion of not a little sympathy for its author. Taken as an evidence of "the severe humiliation his haughty spirit had experienced" in his capture, this "brief sad note," as it has been characterized, in which "his pungent and caustic humor is at an end," has been contrasted with "the humorous, satirical, self-confident tone of his former letters." There is really no word for it but hypocrisy—I doubt if its parallel can be found in history.

The only subsequent allusion to this subject which I have met with in his correspondence, is in a letter to Robert Morris, dated at New York, on the 19th May, 1777, in which he says: "It would for several reasons have been highly improper, to have opened the business by letter, which, if I have the pleasure of seeing you, you will be convinced of."

What he expected to accomplish by his interview with the members of Congress is matter of conjecture

—except as we may infer it from his cotemporary scheme of treason, and the earnestness with which he urged his personal friends and members of the Committee at Philadelphia to visit him under the safe conduct of the Howes. It is hardly too much to suspect, in view of the base treachery of his Plan, that if any thing was to be accomplished by the most unworthy means and appliances, he, at any rate, would not shrink from the attempt. From the beginning of the contest, it was a principal object with the British emissaries (whether Generals or Commissioners, or both,) to weaken the power and counteract the views of the American leaders, by breaking and dividing the Congress among themselves. To complete their design, they were ready to invoke not only fire and sword, but intimidation, falsehood, and corruption!

This policy culminated in the grand Commission of 1778—which produced nothing but disappointment and chagrin in England, with an end to all negotiation. In the Parliamentary discussions which followed the intelligence of Burgoyne's defeat and capture and preceded the appointment of that commission, there is a significant passage which I will quote here, as it serves to show the character of Lee's communications to his relatives in England.

On the 4th December, 1777, Sir Charles Bunbury said that “he would not take upon him to say what America would do now; but he could assure the House from the authority of a dear, but unfortunate relation of his, the unhappy General Lee, that the Americans would, at the beginning of the dispute, have been perfectly satisfied to submit in every respect to Great Britain, provided they should be at liberty to raise, by what means they thought proper, any sum which the Parliament of England should demand of them. He could not tell whether they would make such an offer now: but he would put them to the test, and by offering them peace, employ the only possible means to subdue them; and that was by dividing them . . .”

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Here, I must for the present occasion, leave the subject. The Battle of Monmouth, Lee's trial, and his subsequent career, must be omitted. I will detain you but for a moment, at its close.

He died in Philadelphia, before the end of the war, at ten o'clock in the evening of Wednesday, the 2d of October, 1782, after an illness of five days. His last words, uttered in the delirium of fever, declared the wandering fancies of his mind to be with the army, and in the heady currents of the fight—"Stand by me, my brave grenadiers!" His remains were conducted, on Friday morning, with military honors, from the City-Tavern, attended by a large concourse of gentlemen of distinction, and deposited in Christ Church Yard.

Among those who paid their passing tribute of respect to his memory, there were doubtless not a few moved by a generous pity for the misfortunes, as they seemed, which enveloped his later years. Their sympathy he had rejected while alive, and that could hardly follow him to his grave. But they forgot the wilful and wayward conduct, which had alienated all who were truly the friends of American Liberty; they remembered only the stirring tones of that patriotism, as they thought, which roused them to arms and urged them to independence. To them it might be as the same tale, and told as sternly, as any of the old familiar lessons of human disappointment. For, from that point of view, neither Troy, nor Carthage, nor any of the old ruined castles of Europe, nor the most tragic story was ever more full of broken hopes and shattered schemes.

But this is changed. If the truth of history means any thing—

" Only the actions of the just,  
Smell sweet, and blossom in the dust."

Tacitus has told us that "it is the chief part of the historian's duty to re-judge the conduct of men; that

generous actions may be snatched from oblivion, and that the author of pernicious counsels, and the perpetrator of evil deeds, may see beforehand, the infamy that awaits them at the tribunal of posterity." So, too, to translate the language of him, who told the story of our Independence in the mother-tongue of Dante: "Make yourselves infamous by your deeds, and history shall make you infamous by her words!" There are, it is true, human failures, which prudence or policy might conceal, which kindness and courtesy might modify; which "courage overshadows with his shield, which imagination covers with her wings, and charity dims with her tears." But Truth "forgives no insult and endures no stain;" and history demands moral sympathies of the highest and noblest kind. "Every truly great and original action has a prospective greatness, not alone from the power of the man who achieves it, but from the various aspects and high thoughts which the same action will continue to present and call up in the minds of others, to the end, it may be, of all time." So, too, with that which is bad—like the poetical vision of the Angel of Sin—it assumes vast proportions, and stands in the pathway of Time—

"A monumental, melancholy gloom  
Seen down all ages."

It is impossible to avoid the constantly recurring contrast of Lee's career, with that of his great Chief. How we love to turn and linger in contemplation of the character of Washington, which we always recognize with a sense of affectionate admiration, not unmingled with an awe like that felt as in the presence of some great Spiritual Power. He who "in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness, in perils among false brethren," still bent all the force of his understanding, and directed all his thoughts and actions, to the good of his country. "In him were united

the purity of the most disinterested patriotism, with all the energy of the most stirring ambition; the utmost reluctance to engage in the contest, with the firmest will never to abandon it when begun." Of him, it might be said with greater truth than it was said of the famous Spanish Cardinal: "He was like a city on the margin of deep waters, where no receding tide reveals anything that is mean, squalid, or unbecoming." So

" Let his great example stand  
Colossal, seen of every land,  
And keep the Soldier firm, the Statesman pure ;  
Till in all lands, and through all human story,  
THE PATH OF DUTY BE THE WAY TO GLORY."

*New York, June 22d, 1858.*





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